Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • May/June 2006 • $4.00/£2.50

GODLY QUALITIES

For God-Realization

ALSO:

The Common Platform Of Religion
Time, the Winkless God
An Encounter With Śrīla Prabhupāda
Origins of Disciplic Succession
Pilgrimage to ISKCON Guyana

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Back to Godh

Founded 1944 • Vol. 40, No. 3 • May / June 2006

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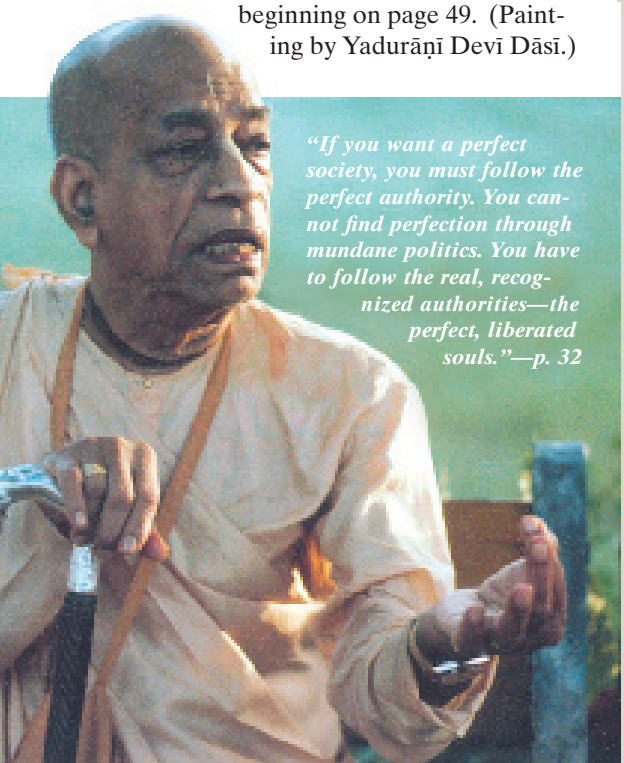
COVER Lord Kṛṣṇa displayed the quality of complete sense control despite being married to thousands of beautiful queens. Sense control is one of the godly qualities discussed in the article beginning on page 49. (Painting by Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsī.)


"If you want a perfect society, you must follow the perfect authority. You cannot find perfection through mundane politics. You have to follow the real, recognized authorities—the perfect, liberated souls."—p. 32

Welcome

IN THIS ISSUE we continue with Amala Bhakta Dāsa's three-part series on essential qualities for God-realization, the list under discussion having been given by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. It includes such entries as freedom from possessiveness, moderation in eating, and dependence on God.

In "Thank God," Arcana Siddhī Devī Dāsī writes about another important quality: gratitude. Without it, we won't get far in our spiritual pursuits. In "An Encounter with Śrīla Prabhupāda," Ramakar expresses his gratitude for a life-changing event that took place more than thirty years ago.

We devotees in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement know we owe a debt of gratitude to all the previous spiritual masters in our line. In "Origins of Disciplic Succession," Satyarāja Dāsa explains how the lineage of those spiritual teachers stretches back to the beginning of creation. The theme of creation plays a big role in "Time, the Winkless God," by Mathureśa Dāsa, where we learn how the Vedic description of creation sheds light on the philosophically challenging concept of time.

One consideration of time is how much of it we waste. In "Remember God?" Bhaktilatā Devī Dāsī tells how she decided to stop wasting time and renew her relationship with God.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

Our Purposes

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and source of all material and spiritual worlds

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa's most recent incarnation, taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

FOUNDER (under the direction of His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda) **His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda**

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Letters

A Symbiosis of Hearts

To Karuṇa Dhārinī Devī Dāsī:
I wish to wholeheartedly thank you for your excellent contribution in the recent "Vedic Observer" [January/February]. Your insightful analysis goes to the very heart of women's essential nature: their unique capacity for nurturing the hearts and minds of their children and equipping them with the prime human values of respect and solidarity. Such a gift and vocation has unfortunately been submerged by the tidal wave of Western feminism. Too busy with the collective project of conquering female equality, too many women have been misled to redefine their worth through material achievements. In this ongoing social struggle, the gains have been all too illusory.

The gradual erosion of fulfilling male-female interaction has only brought us the bitter harvest of disfunctional and broken families, with the mounting casualties of neglected and confused youth filling the gap with senseless and often destructive hedonism.

Towards a much needed alternative, you wisely offer very pertinent realizations: that humans of both sexes are optimally fulfilled when we all work together in our common spiritual emancipation. When we harmoniously engage our different capabilities in a symbiosis of hearts to nourish spiritually based relations, then our real growth potential can be activated and thus permit our love to uplift each other, allowing it to increasingly flow back to its source, our Supreme Beloved. Thank you for lighting this hope through your valued reflections.

Gokulānanda Dāsa
ISKCON Vancouver

Beneficial Advice

The first BTG magazine for 2006 is spectacular. Every single page has the nectar of devotion and is very meaningful. I have especially benefited from reading the one written by Arcana Siddhī Devī Dāsī, "Cleansing the Temple of the Heart." I have been struggling with false pride for a long time, and in recent weeks it has been bothering me tremendously. My offenses are great, since I am at a low level of devotion. I have read her article over and over again and look forward to receiving more such beneficial advice.

Sangeeta Kapur Wahi
Via the Internet

Getting Assurance

To Arcana Siddhī Devī Dāsī: I would like to say thank you for putting to pen the article entitled "Cleansing the Temple of the Heart" [January/February]. It has really opened my mind and heart to purely serving Lord Kṛṣṇa. I'm a devotee of Kṛṣṇa but have sometimes put Him in the backseat of my life. Right now I'm going through the pressure of studying for my upcoming exams, and the lost of my grandmother, one of the biggest influences in my life, a few weeks ago hasn't made it easy. She was the one who first taught me to say the name of Kṛṣṇa. She always sang His praises and taught me so much about Him.

I was at the library reading through my study material for my upcoming exams and getting really frustrated, as I was retaining nothing of what I was studying. At this point I decided to pick up my copy of the Jan/Feb 2006 issue of BTG magazine, which I had brought along with me. While skimming through, I came across your article. It spoke about everything I was feeling, and it gave me the assurance I needed that Kṛṣṇa is HERE, and waiting for me to open up my heart, mind, and soul back to Him. I started chanting the *mahā-mantra* at that very moment, and I felt a peace

and calmness. It was so wonderful.

Thank you once again, and may Kṛṣṇa be with you always.

Randy Siew
Via the Internet

Prasādam and the Eucharist

In Satyarāja's article about *prasādam* (March/April) he has made a grave error when speaking of the Eucharist, worshiped by sincere Christians in the Holy Catholic Church. He said it is a mere wafer that is received once in a week. He's not understanding true Christianity. In Catholic Churches (which are still faithful to the ancient, sacred traditions of the early Christians, whereas many other sects have lost much sacred tradition) sincere Christians are eager to attend Mass and there receive the holy body and holy blood of Christ. Some Catholics go every day of their life to receive this Eucharist, which purifies their soul and body because it is actually Jesus himself.

Our local Church holds Mass three times each day, and more on Friday and Sunday. Many great saints have survived on the Eucharist alone for years at a time. Like the Gosvāmīs, they were completely off the bodily platform and loving God each moment.

To sum up my letter: Satyarāja Prabhu, you've made a mistake; the Eucharist is very holy. Some lukewarm Christians have no faith in this Holy Communion, but that is unfortunate, and by God's grace will hopefully change. Seems you have met some faithless people who have influenced how you perceive "the most blessed sacrament" in Christ's Church: the Holy Eucharist.

Joan M.
Via Internet

Satyarāja Dāsa replies: If my article conveyed the mistaken idea that I was minimizing the Holy Eucharist, I am deeply sorry. I did not intend that. In fact, I consider the principle of the Eucharist to be an important part of Christian practice, which is why I lament about its compromised implementation in modern times.

My point was that as a general principle *prasādam* nourishes the bodies of the entire community of practicing Vaiṣṇavas, not just saints. I don't doubt that a number of saints in the Christian tradition were able to use the Eucharist as devotees use *prasādam,* but this is not the general state of affairs. In fact, one of Prabhupāda's main points in relation to Christians was that if they actually practiced their religion as they should, it would be no different than Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So I accept that there is a certain similarity between *prasādam* and the Eucharist. But when it comes to *prasādam,* Christians could learn a lot, and they could apply what they've learned to the principle of the Eucharist. Again, sorry for any misunderstanding.

Great Online Glossary

I am so stoked that I've found a glossary like yours! I've been looking for certain pronunciations on the net for a while now, and I can't believe I've found them. I cannot wait to study the rest of your Web site. Thank you so very much for the hard work you have put forth in compiling the content that you have (and not just on the glossary either). Just by glancing around, I can tell that great care and effort was taken to establish the web content and layout.

Thank you so very, very much for sharing your site with the world.

R.J.
Via the Internet

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FOUNDER'S LECTURE

St. Pascal's Franciscan Seminary,
Melbourne—June 28, 1974

THE COMMON PLATFORM OF RELIGION

Religious unity is possible when we transcend temporary designations and accept our shared position as eternal servants of God.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā
yayātmā suprasīdati

"The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupt-ed to completely satisfy the self."
—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6

FATHER GREENE and all other Fathers, and ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for your kindly participating in this movement. I will try to explain some verses from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is considered the essence of Vedic literature. Vedic literature means the four *Vedas—Sāma, Yajur, Ṛg, Atharva*—then 108 *Upaniṣads,* 18 *Purāṇas, Rāmāyaṇa,* and *Mahābhārata.* It is an immense treasure-house of literature. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is one of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* and in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there are eighteen thousand verses. I am just trying to explain one or two verses.

In his introduction Father Greene hinted about the common platform of religion. That common platform is not very difficult to understand because religion means to know God and abide by the orders of God. That is religion. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated, *dharmaṁ tu sākṣāt bhagavat-praṇītam.* The true religious system cannot be manufactured by man. No. Man-made religion is not religion. Religion means God-made religion. That is religion, just as law means the orders enunciated by the government.

You cannot manufacture law at home. That is not law. Similarly, religion means the orders given by God. This is a simple definition of religion. We must

The congregational chanting of God's holy names is a practical way for various religious traditions to glorify God together.

Detail from a painting by Jñānañjana Dāsa

Any human being, if he tries and if he reads the scriptures—never mind, Bible, Bhagavad-gītā, Bhāgavata—then he will understand God.

• • •

know God, we must know His order, and we must abide by that order. That is religion. Take any type of religion, and these three things are there: we must try to know God, we must try to know what He desires, and we must try to know how to fulfill it.

Therefore in the *Bhāgavatam* [1.2.6] it is said,

sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā
yayātmā suprasīdati

This describes the first-class religious system. It does not say Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity. It says, "The supreme religious system is that which teaches the follower how to love God." That is the supreme religion. It does not matter whether you learn to love God through Christianity or Hinduism or Islam, but the result should be that you have advanced in the art of loving God.

Sa vai puṁsāṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje. The Sanskrit word *bhakti* is used. *Bhakti* means devotion. To render service to God is *bhakti.* We are rendering service to so many things. That is not *bhakti. Bhakti* means to render service to God.

The word for God used here is *adhokṣaja.* There is much terminology for understanding God, but here in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* God is mentioned as *adhokṣaja. Adhokṣaja* means beyond our sense perception. Another phrase that is used is *avāṅ mānasa-gocaraḥ:* "beyond the expression of mind and words."

The word *adhokṣaja* can be broken into three words: *adha, akṣa,* and *ja. Adha* means "subdued." In the Sanskrit alphabet the first letter is *a,* and the last is *kṣa.* So *akṣa* means "from *a* to *kṣa"* and refers to whatever we can understand by the combination of words. And *ja* means "born of." So if you combine many words but something is still beyond expression, that thing is called *adhokṣaja,* "beyond everything describable from *a* to *kṣa.*" It is not by vocabulary that we can understand the nature of God. God is beyond our material sense perception.

It is said in the Vedic literature, *ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ.* Kṛṣṇa is a name of God. It is said that we cannot understand Kṛṣṇa, or God—His name, His form, His attributes, His pastimes—by our blunt material senses. Then how it He to be understood?

The Business Of Human Life

Human life is meant for understanding God. That is the only business of human life. Material nature gives us the opportunity to have the human form of life. The facility of this form of life is given to us just to understand God. There are 8,400,000 forms of life. In other forms it is not possible to understand God. If we call all the dogs of your country—"Come here. We shall talk about God"—there is no possibility of their understanding. But in the human form of life there is the possibility. It doesn't matter whether one is in India or America or Australia. Any human being, if he tries and if he reads the scriptures—never mind, Bible, *Bhagavad-gītā, Bhāgavata*—then he will understand God.

Therefore the human form of life is meant only for understanding God. If we divert our attention to any other business, we are spoiling our energy. Because what are the other activities? Everyone is active for sleeping, eating, having sexual intercourse, and defending. These things are present even for cats and dogs. They also eat, they also sleep, they also have the propensity for sexual intercourse, and they also defend in their own way. If your human life is also spoiled only on these activities, then you are missing the chance.

Human activity should be for understanding God, or the Absolute Truth. That is Vedānta philosophy. *Athāto brahma jijñāsā. Veda* means knowledge, and *anta* means ultimate. We are acquiring knowledge in so many departments, but the ultimate knowledge is to know God. Therefore Vedānta says, *athātho brahma jijñāsā:* "Now, in this life, inquire into the Absolute Truth."

In the morning the birds are inquiring: "Where shall we go this morning to get some fruits, some eatables?" They ask these questions. And there is some talking: "*ki-chi mihi.*" Human life is not meant simply for that kind of question. The questions for human beings are "What is God? What am I? What is my relationship with God? What is the ultimate goal of life?" These questions and answers should be found in human society. These questions must arise: "What is God? What is material nature? Who has created it? How was it created? How is it going on?" So many things.

Naturally, if we are philosophically minded we inquire, "How was this world created? Who created it?" And there are many ways of answering. But the *Vedānta-sūtra* answers that the creator of whatever we are seeing—the cosmic manifestation—is God, Brahman.

God, or the Supreme Truth, the Absolute Truth, is that from which everything has come. That is stated in the beginning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Janmādy asya yataḥ:* "The Absolute

Truth is that from which everything has come into existence."

RELIGION IS NOT FAITH

The common platform of religion, therefore, is to try to understand the Supreme Soul and turn our loving propensities to that Supreme Soul. In the dictionary it is said that religion is a kind of faith. No. It is a permanent arrangement. It is not faith. Faith we can change. Today I am Hindu; I can become a Christian tomorrow. You are a Christian; you can change your faith tomorrow. In Sanskrit the word for religion does not mean faith; it means the original characteristic of a thing. That is called religion. "Original characteristic" means that which cannot be changed. That quality, that characteristic, is always with us.

The Vedic version is that the living entity is an eternal servant of God. When he forgets this relationship—that he is an eternal servant of God—he begins his material existence. In material existence nobody is prepared to become a servant. Everyone is prepared to become the master. That is the struggle for existence. Everyone is trying to become the master. Even in the dogs' society you will find that one dog is trying to predominate by barking "I am better than you."

This is called the struggle for existence. Everyone—individual to individual, nation to nation, society to society, so-called religion to so-called religion—everyone is trying to become the master. Nobody is trying to become the servant. But the real position is that we living entities are eternal servants of God. As soon as we forget this formula, we are in material existence. And as soon as we revive our original consciousness, that is the spiritual platform. Therefore we are propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or God consciousness, so that people can come to the point of understanding that we are eternal servants of God.

As I was saying, in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is enunciated, "That is a first-class religious system which teaches its followers how to again become servants of God." That is first-class religion. So how to become the servant of God? In the *Bhagavad-gītā* many types of instruction are there: *karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, dhyāna-yoga, bhakti-yoga.* But Kṛṣṇa's ultimate instruction to Arjuna is *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66]: "Your only business is to surrender unto Me, because you are My eternal servant. You rebelled against serving Me. You wanted to live independently in the material world, artificially trying to become the master. Give up this propensity. Surrender unto Me. Then you will be happy." And Kṛṣṇa assures, *ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi:* "And when you have surrendered, I will excuse you from all reactions of sinful life."

Why has He said "sinful life"? Because in the material world every activity is sinful because the main principle is how to become the master. To become the master everyone is prepared to do anything, never mind whether sinful or pious. Another meaning of "sinful" is anything against the order of God. In the Bible there are so many commandments—"You shall not do this." A sinful man cannot approach God. That is the verdict of Vedic literature.

yeṣāṁ tv anta-gataṁ pāpaṁ
janānāṁ puṇya-karmaṇām
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā
bhajante māṁ dṛḍha-vratāḥ
[*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.28]

One who is completely free from the reactions of sinful life can completely devote himself to the service of the Lord.

SYMPTOMS OF PURE LOVE OF GOD

The common platform is there. God is neither Hindu nor Muslim. The method of approaching God may be different, but the ultimate end is how to love God or how to serve God. One cannot serve anybody without love. In the material world one serves another for money, for a reward. But serving God is not like that. In the verse I quoted from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated, *ahaituki apratihatā.* Service to God must be without motive.

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millenniums ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch, jh,** and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

In human life this is a prerogative: to get out of the material energy and put ourselves again into the spiritual energy.

• • •

Here in the material world we serve somebody with a motive, for some material gain. But in the spiritual world, to serve God means "It is my duty. I love Him. I want to serve Him." Because a mother loves her child, she is not like the maidservant who is paid. The mother loves her child spontaneously. She loves to serve the child. Similarly, real love of God is spontaneous, without any motive, and without impediment.

Love of God cannot be checked by any material condition. It is not that because a man is poor he cannot love God. No. Or because a man is very rich he cannot love God. No. *Ahaituki apratihatā.* Whatever you may be, you can learn how to love God without any impediment. And if we come to that stage of life—here it is said, *yayātmā suprasīdati*—then you will be fully satisfied and pleased. If you are engaged in the service of the Lord without any motive and without being impeded—spontaneously loving—then you will feel complete satisfaction.

There are many instances of devotees of the Lord who displayed this. One was Dhruva Mahārāja, a five-year-old boy. There was some family dissension. He was insulted by his stepmother, and he wanted to retaliate. So he inquired from his mother, "How can I do it?" His mother advised, "Take shelter of God. He can help you." So he went to the forest and meditated for six months. When he saw God, he said, "My Lord, I am now fully satisfied. I don't want any benediction from You." *Svāmin kṛtārtho 'smi varaṁ na yāce.*

That is the actual realization of God. God realization means there is no more want. All demands, all wants, are finished. Therefore it is said, *yayātmā suprasīdati.* Because we want something, there is a demand. As long as there are demands, we will never be satisfied. When there are no demands—when we are fully satisfied—that is God realization.

Again, the common platform is there. At the present moment people are suffering. Not at the present moment—always. Anyone in the material world is full of anxieties, because material wants cannot be satisfied at any time. They will simply increase. Unless one comes to God consciousness there is no possibility of satisfaction. *Yayātmā samprasīdati. Prasīdati* means fully satisfied, no more want. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [6.22] it is said, *yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate:* "If you are situated in that position, then the most dangerous type of unhappiness cannot agitate you." If you are fixed up in God consciousness, then nothing of these material disturbances can agitate you. *Yasmin sthito na duḥkhena guruṇāpi vicālyate*.

Bhakti-Yoga For Perfection

People should try to attain that perfect transcendental position so that they become fully satisfied, no more want. The process to attain that position is called *bhakti-yoga,* and we are teaching and propagating *bhakti-yoga.* People are disturbed in so many ways in this age, known as the Age of Kali. To give them real satisfaction of life requires awakening them to the platform of God consciousness. The simple method is chanting the holy name of God. We are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa means addressing God with His energy, Harā. Fire is with its energy, heat and light; similarly, God has energies, many energies. The principal energies are the spiritual energy and the material energy. We are under the material energy at the present moment. We have to transfer ourselves to the spiritual energy, because we are spirit. If you put a fish on land, however you try to make him comfortable he will never be comfortable, because land is not the place for the fish. Throw him into the water, and he will be comfortable. Similarly, we are spirit. We are now encaged within the material body. *Dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā.* [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13] Our business should be how to get out of the material energy and put ourselves under the spiritual energy. Then our life will be fully satisfied.

In human life this is a prerogative: to get out of the material energy and put ourselves again into the spiritual energy. To put ourselves again into the spiritual energy, we have to get free from designations. What are the designations? "I am Hindu," "I am Muslim," "I am Christian," "I am American," "I am Indian," "I am this," "I am that." These are designations. And to become free from designations means "I do not belong to any of these categories. I am an eternal servant of God." If you come to that position, then that is the common platform. Let everyone perceive that he is an eternal servant of God. Then all problems will be solved.

That is the purpose of our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. We are chanting the holy name of God, and we are recommending that others chant the holy name of God. God must have some name. In the Bible it is said, "Hallowed be thy name." So there is a name. God's name is there. God's name is Christ or Kristo or Kṛṣṇa. So we can chant together. Where is the difficulty? Those who are professing Christianity, you have got the name of God. Otherwise why did Jesus recommended, "Glorify the name of God"? That is chanting. So let us jointly glorify the name of God. That is the common platform.

Thank you very much.

Glossary

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to his friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in his original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the A… ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goo… and ignorance) that hold sway over all act… material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and his devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas.*

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

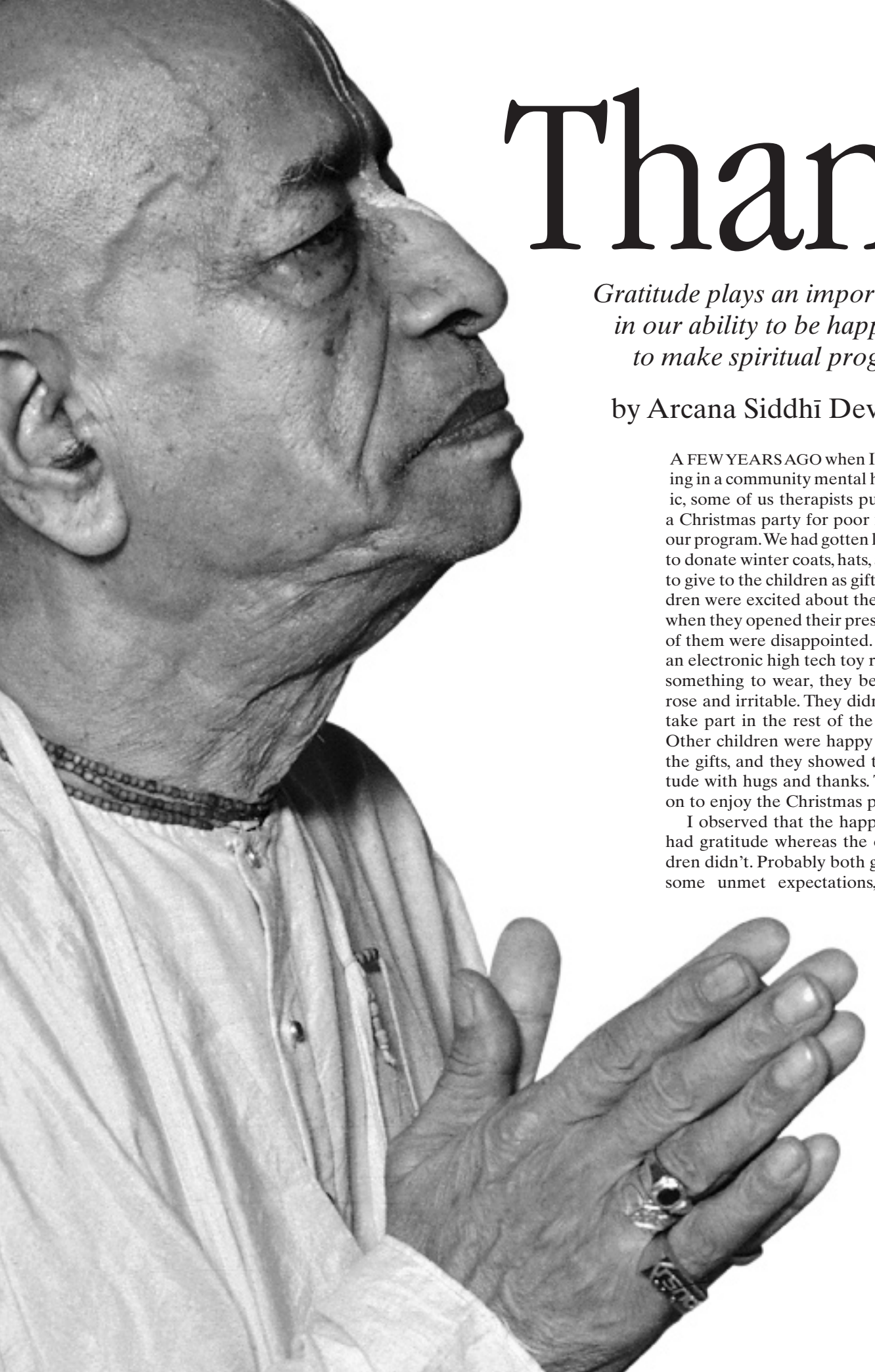
Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.



Thank

Gratitude plays an important role in our ability to be happy and to make spiritual progress.

by Arcana Siddhī Devī Dāsī

A FEW YEARS AGO when I was working in a community mental health clinic, some of us therapists put together a Christmas party for poor families in our program. We had gotten local stores to donate winter coats, hats, and gloves to give to the children as gifts. The children were excited about the party, but when they opened their presents, some of them were disappointed. Expecting an electronic high tech toy rather than something to wear, they became morose and irritable. They didn't want to take part in the rest of the festivities. Other children were happy to receive the gifts, and they showed their gratitude with hugs and thanks. They went on to enjoy the Christmas party.

I observed that the happy children had gratitude whereas the other children didn't. Probably both groups had some unmet expectations, but one

God

group allowed their disappointment to overshadow the entire experience and felt no gratitude for what they were given.

Gratitude is an important quality that affects how we see the world. When working with depressed clients, I often notice their inability to appreciate what they have. Rather, they concentrate on what they lack. There is a saying: "What we focus on tends to expand."

This concept is corroborated in the teachings of *bhakti-yoga*. Here we learn that our thoughts are so powerful that they mold our character and determine our destination.

Over the years I have observed people on a spiritual path. I have seen how gratitude plays a significant role in a person's ability to feel happy and make spiritual progress. To illuminate this point, I'll share a story a friend recently told me.

Lessons from a Saved Cat

Driving home on a cold, rainy day, he saw a small animal running back and forth in the middle of a congested intersection. At first he thought it was a rat, but then he realized it was a small black kitten.

He watched the kitten parade around the large tractor-trailers, completely oblivious to his dangerous predicament. Feeling compassion, my friend pulled over to the side of the road to rescue the kitten. Careful to avoid the traffic, he made several futile attempts to catch the kitten. Finally he was able to grab hold of him.

He put the wet, dirty little cat next to him in the front seat of his car. The kitten made an ugly face and hissed at him. Incensed, my friend took the cat by the scruff of the neck and looked him in the eyes, saying, "I saved you. Don't you know you would have been

Yamarāja Dāsa

We owe a great debt to our spiritual predecessors, who come to guide us to our eternal home.

• • •

killed out there on the street?" The kitten seemed unimpressed by this lecture. My benevolent friend took the cat to a nearby church that he knew would find him a home.

After dropping the kitten off, he reflected on the incident. He thought that in some ways he was very much like that little cat. How many times had Kṛṣṇa saved him from destruction, and how many times had he rejected or minimized the Lord's help?

Remembering how we have been saved from material suffering is crucial to our spiritual lives. Unlike the little kitten, we have the ability to understand this point to some degree. I know that before becoming a devotee of Kṛṣṇa I was constantly struggling under the dictates of my mind and senses. I didn't have any understanding of the purpose of life, and I was aimlessly going through the motions of living. I understand how my spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa saved me from this, but what I tend to forget is the volumes of future suffering I have been spared by becoming a devotee.

We owe a great debt to our spiritual predecessors, who come to guide us to our eternal home. They are compassionate, selfless persons who know that the Lord wants all of us to return to the spiritual kingdom. As beneficiaries of their efforts, we can show our gratitude by assisting them in their mission.

"Again Become a Mouse"

On the other hand, ungrateful persons forget the gifts they received and may even do harm to their benefactor. My spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, tells a story about a mouse who sought shelter at the feet of a sage while being chased by a cat. The sage asked the mouse how he could serve him, and the mouse asked to be transformed into a cat. The sage, having such powers, granted the mouse his request. Soon the mouse, now a cat, returned to the shelter of the sage, complaining that he was being chased by a dog. This time the cat asked to become a dog. Again the benevolent sage granted the cat's wish, and the cat became a dog.

Shortly thereafter the dog appeared before the sage full of fear and crying for protection. Now he was being chased by a tiger. The sage, understanding the desire of the dog, mercifully allowed the dog to become a tiger. At this point in the story we can think about how grateful the dog should have felt towards the sage for giving him shelter and saving him once again. But rather than feeling thankful, the dog, now a tiger, stared hungrily at the sage. The sage, understanding the mind of the tiger, waved his hand and said, "Again become a mouse."

By performing devotional service under the guidance of a competent spiritual guide, a person can become empowered to do extraordinary things. Śrīla Prabhupāda is a prime example of such empowerment. His spiritual master asked him to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking countries. At the advanced age of sixty-nine, Śrīla Prabhupāda crossed the Atlantic on a cargo ship, enduring two heart attacks at sea. With no money and no support, Śrīla Prabhupāda started a worldwide movement. Filled with love and gratitude, he always remembered and glorified his spiritual teacher.

Unlike Śrīla Prabhupāda, we may become intoxicated by the power and fame that may come to us by efforts to serve our spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Then we may become like the mouse that became a tiger—forgetting where our good fortune has come from. And we too will again become a mouse.

An antidote to becoming proud and forgetting our benefactors is to always give thanks to our spiritual guides. Before starting any spiritual activity, we should thank our spiritual master for giving us the opportunity to engage in spiritual life and for teaching us the process for reawakening our dormant love for the Lord. A grateful heart shields us from complacency and depression.

A Gratitude Journal

Gratitude is an intrinsic quality of the soul. But while we are still affected by our material qualities, we need to be mindful of and practice our dormant spiritual qualities. A useful exercise is to keep a "gratitude journal" and every night before going to sleep reflect on our day and write down the things we are grateful for. This will help negate the mind's tendency to focus on what we don't have as opposed to what we do have.

We need to trust that Kṛṣṇa is giving us what we need, when we need it. When our wants supersede our needs, we can look very much like the children at the Christmas party who wanted a toy rather than a warm coat, and our internal reaction might be very similar to their display of dissatisfaction. In such an ungrateful state of mind, we close ourselves off to the rest of the "party." When we feel and show gratitude to our spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, out of affection they naturally want to give us more and more spiritual gifts and empowerment to do wonderful things in the world.

Arcana Siddhi Devī Dāsī was initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1976. She lives with her husband and son in Sandy Ridge, North Carolina, where she works as a family therapist. She is a frequent contributor to Back to Godhead.

The Fallacy of "Power to the People"

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and one of his disciples took place in Paris during the summer of 1974.

Disciple: Last night in your lecture you made the analogy that if people don't follow God's laws, they'll be punished by God, just as they're punished for disobeying the state laws. So the young people thought you must be a fascist.

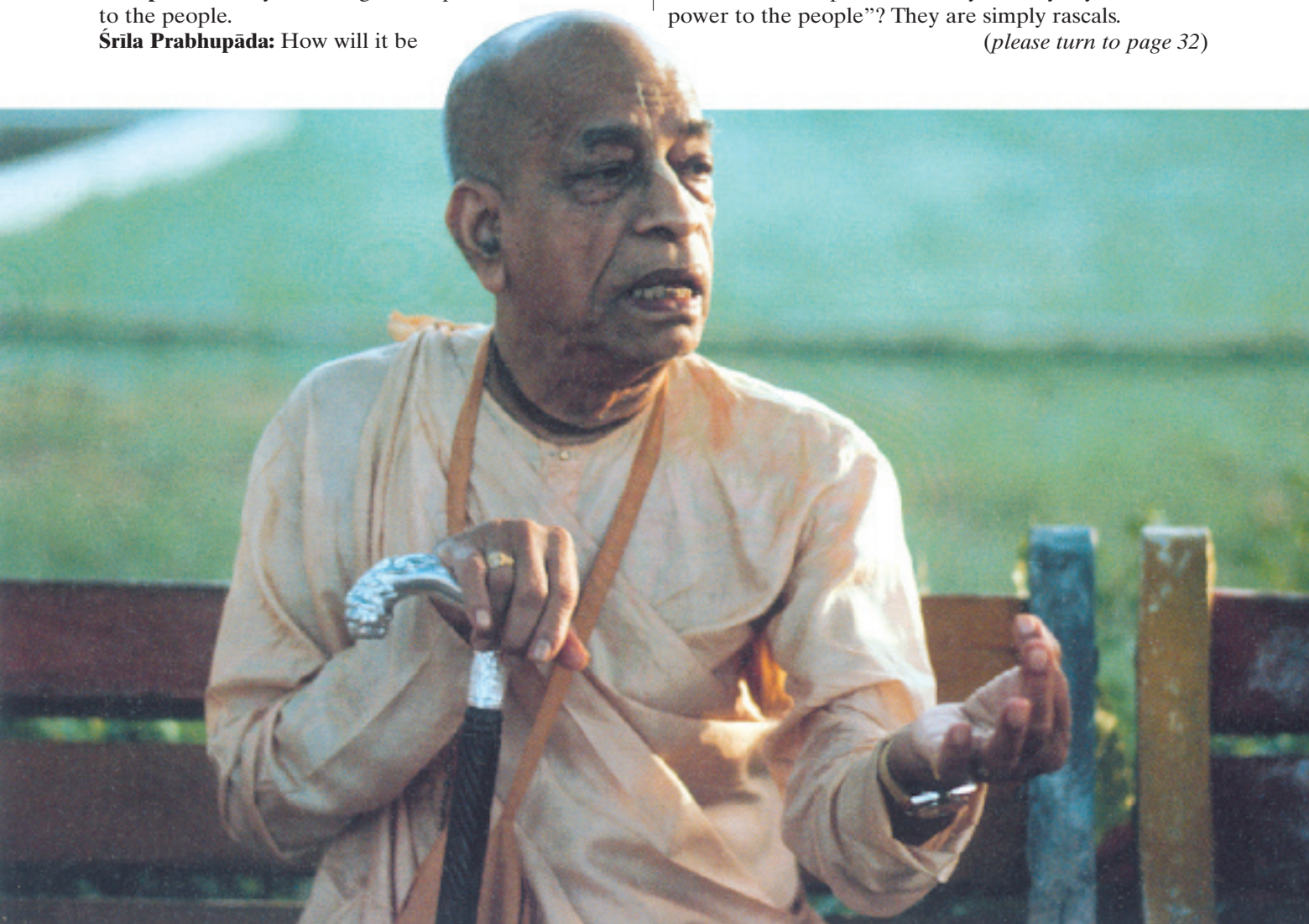
Śrīla Prabhupāda: But this is actually happening all over the world. How can they deny it? Government today means "Might makes right." Somehow you take power, and then you are right. It is a question of which group gets the power.

Disciple: But they want to give the power to the people.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: How will it be possible? There are so many people and so many different opinions—you have your people, and someone else has his people. As soon as you want to give the power to your people, the others will oppose. This is human nature; you cannot change it. They're thinking that the power should be given to the people, but there are many other people who will disagree. This is the nature of the material world: Everyone is envious of everyone else. But these rascals don't have the intelligence to understand this. In India there was Gandhi—a gentleman, a very nice politician—but he was killed. So you cannot stop this. It is the nature of the material world—everyone is envious of others.

You'll never be able to find a group of materialistic men who are perfect. So why do they say, "Give the power to the people"? They are simply rascals.

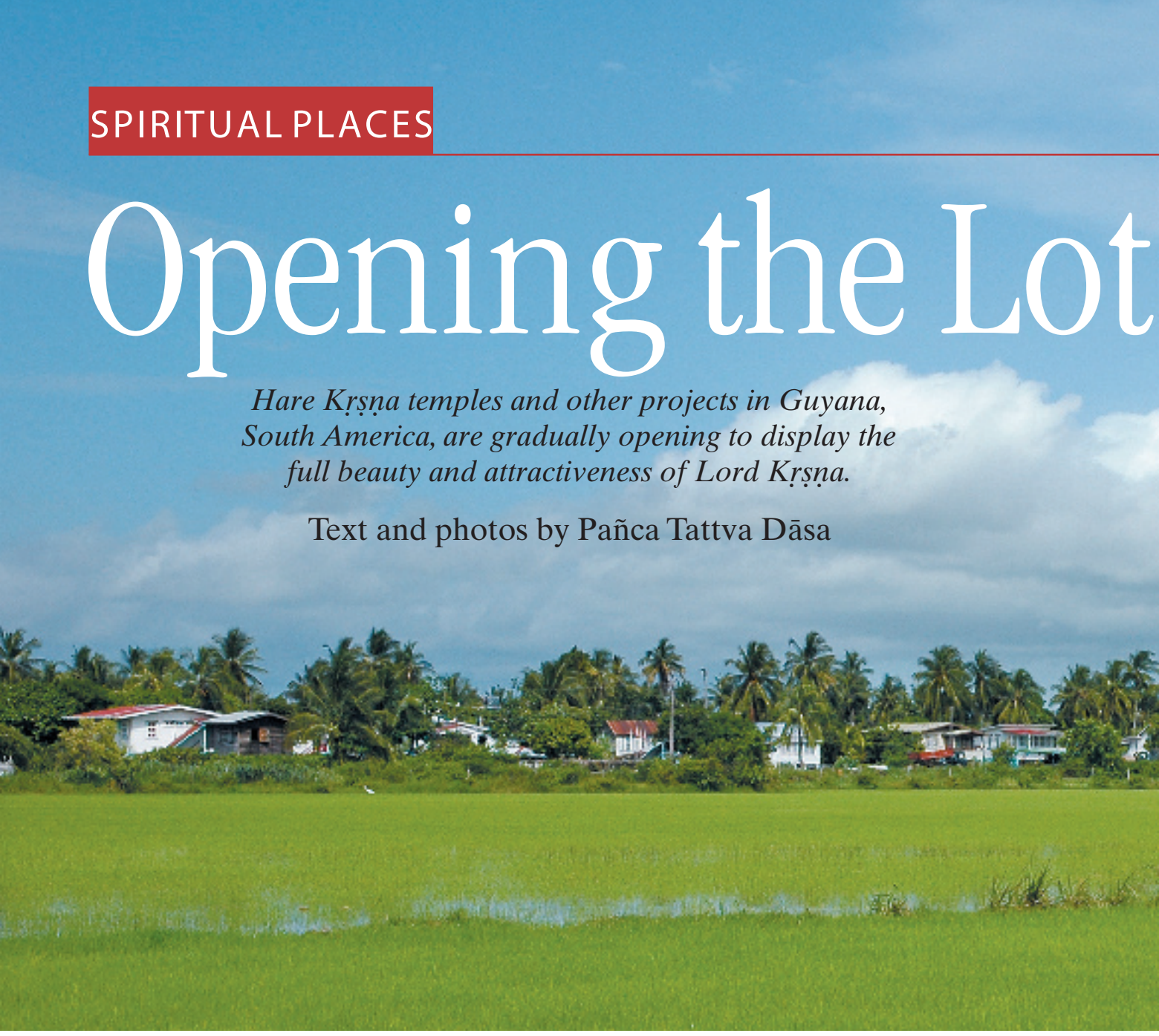
(*please turn to page 32*)



Opening the Lot

Hare Kṛṣṇa temples and other projects in Guyana, South America, are gradually opening to display the full beauty and attractiveness of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text and photos by Pañca Tattva Dāsa



IN JULY OF 2005, the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees of Guyana, South America, would celebrate their first Jagannātha Rathayātrā festival in eighteen years. Guyanese devotees living in our community of New Raman Reti Dhama in Alachua, Florida, were encouraging everyone to visit Guyana for the festival.

My wife, Yauvanānanda Dāsī, and I didn't need much convincing. For a long time my wife had wanted to return to visit Guyana, the land where she was born. I had heard many stories about the extraordinary hospitality of the Guyanese Vaiṣṇavas, and

ISKCON Guyana's Sri Sri Gaura Nitai Ashirvad Mandir (left) overlooks lush green fields (above) in the West Coast Demerara region. Inset: A devotee opens a lotus before offering it to the Lord.

us

my friendship with Guyanese devotees living in Florida made me want to meet more of these kindhearted, godly souls.

To prepare for our trip, I did some research. The country of Guyana is situated on the Caribbean coast of South America, nestled between Venezuela to the west, Suriname to the east, and enormous Brazil to the south. It is roughly the size of the United Kingdom, with a population of less than 700,000. Over ninety percent of the people live along the coast, the interior of the country for the most part being dense tropical jungle. It is the only English-speaking country in South America. Since gaining its independence from Great Britain in 1966, the country has been through periods of harsh economic and social upheaval. During the 1980s in particular, many thousands of people emigrated from Guyana to look for a better life elsewhere. Over 300,000 Guyanese now live the United States.

One might ask, why go to a place that so many people are leaving? By material calculation, it would seem undesirable. A Vaiṣṇava, however, has a different set of criteria for making travel plans. Will I please the Supreme Personality of Godhead by going there? Will there be some service I can do for the Lord and His devotees? Can I obtain the association of saintly persons fixed on the path of devotional service? Could I be of some assistance to devotees spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in that place? By all indications, these purposes would be well served by attending the Jagannātha Rathayātrā festival in Williamsburg, Guyana.

Furthermore, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, in His enchanting form of Lord Jagannātha, would be riding the public roads, with His loving devotees sur-

rounding His chariot in a grand parade of chanting and dancing.

Besides, our visit would be in relative comfort. We'd be visiting several temples already established in Guyana by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Beginning in the early 1970s, Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees had done the hard work of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness under the most austere of circumstances. His Holiness Hridayānanda Goswami and Mahāvīra Dāsa were two of the first disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda to visit Guyana. Later, Bhūtādi Dāsa, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first Guyanese disciples, pioneered systematic book distribution and other programs to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to Guyana. In 1981, His Holiness Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami conducted the first initiations of disciples there. With the arrival of Agraṇī Dāsa from the United States in the 1980s, the presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the public took on a new dimension. There were tent programs in cities and towns all over the country, featuring talks, theater, and slide shows depicting various aspects of Vaiṣṇava philosophy, as well as the distribution of sanctified vegetarian food offered to Kṛṣṇa. Later on, Candrāvalī Devī Dāsī, a Guyanese lady who joined ISKCON after attending one of the tent programs, inspired many people through her spiritual qualities to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Reminders of India

Our airline flight took us from Orlando, Florida, to Miami, and then across the Caribbean Sea to Georgetown, Guyana. The small Georgetown airport was only recently upgraded to accept larger planes. We arrived almost two hours late, but waiting patiently for us was Tridandi Goswami Dāsa, temple president of the Sri Sri Gaura Nitai Ashirvada Mandir. Tridandi saw to every arrangement for

Bhūtādi Dāsa (above), one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's first Guyanese disciples, leads a kīrtana *in Georgetown, the capital. Devotees at the Williamsburg temple (top) start setting up a tent to prepare for Guyana's first Rathayātrā festival. At right and far right, the deities of the Williamsburg temple: Rādhā-Gokulacandra and Gaura-Nitāi.*

our lodging and travel. Practically speaking, everything was taken care of before we could even ask.

Over the next few days I saw many reminders of India: herds of cows on the roads, rice paddy fields, forests of coconut palms, and people of Asian Indian decent going about their business everywhere. The British brought the first Indian immigrants to Guyana as indentured servants to work on the expansive sugar plantations. They were replacements for slave labor, slavery having been abolished in 1834. I mused that some Indians, having survived the grueling three-month voyage, must have seen the Guyanese coastline with its palm and fruit trees and suspected their ship's captain of playing a weird practical joke by bring-

Prabhupāda Deva Dāsa, from Guyana, and Ādikartā Dāsa, from Alachua, Florida, appear on a television program (right). Below, the author trails the Rathayātrā procession in Rosehall. Right: kīrtana *in the Essequibo temple. Bottom right: picking coconuts on the Essequibo temple property.*

Yauvanānanda Devī Dāsī

ing them right back to India.

We arrived two weeks before Jagannātha Rathayātrā, and in the time leading up to the festival we visited three ISKCON temples: Sri Sri Gaura Nitai Ashirvada Mandir on Old Crane Road, the Essequibo temple, and Sri Sri Radha Gokulachandra Mandir in Williamsburg. Everywhere the devotees were thoughtful and accommodating. At the temple on Old Crane Road, we were given the very best lodging available, normally reserved for dignitaries and temple leaders. In Essequibo, we stayed with a family who moved downstairs so that we could have the comforts of the better upstairs rooms. At the temple in Williamsburg, we were lodged in the comfortable home of a doctor who was out of town but wanted his house to be used for the care of visitors. Every conceivable kindness was showered upon us.

We were joined by Ādi Kartā Dāsa, a senior Prabhupāda disciple and British national now living in Florida, and Rājarṣi Dāsa, a devotee from Trinidad who teaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the Caribbean. Rājarṣi, the pioneer in exposing the Guyanese to Kṛṣṇa consciousness through television, arranged a half-dozen television programs for us to speak about Lord Jagannātha.

Television is the way to reach a wide audience in Guyana. As recently as fifteen years ago there were no televisions there. Now television antennas are ubiquitous, satellite dishes are becoming more common, and a number of government-licensed television stations have sprung up across the country. Unlike the United States, where powerful corporations tightly control the so-called public airwaves, television is very accessible in Guyana. A thirty-second advertisement slot on a station whose signal reaches most of the country costs only US$1.50, and the station managers are always looking for interesting material to broadcast. Consequently, Rājarṣi arranged for many thirty-second advertisements about Jagannātha Rathayātrā to run on television in the days leading up to the festival.

I was traveling with some deity forms of Kṛṣṇa I worship every day. When a devotee named Suratanātha found out, he brought me some lotuses to offer them. I was puzzled, however, because the lotuses were closed. Suratanātha just laughed and showed me how to open a lotus before offering it. He explained that there are

many kinds of lotuses in Guyana. Some are open, some closed. There are white ones and pink ones, and a very lightly colored pink one that is highly prized.

As I traveled to the temples in Guyana, meeting devotees, seeing their dedication to spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and experiencing how receptive the people are to it, the example of the lotus kept appearing in my mind. The demeanor of the Guyanese devotees is as attractive as a lotus, and the temples and other projects are gradually opening like petals of a lotus to display the full beauty and attractiveness of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

On the first public-chanting procession I attended, I was amazed at the eagerness of people to give donations and get some *prasādam* sweets

and spiritual books. The typical Guyanese house is built in two stories; the first floor is for the kitchen and storage, and the second floor has the bedrooms and formal rooms. Some of these homes are little more than wooden shacks on stilts, but a few are very spacious and opulent. Practically all of them have a fenced-in yard and a gated entrance. The book distributors accompanying the chanting party approached each gate, announcing their presence by calling out, "Inside!" Oftentimes, the homeowners would already be waiting at the gate with money in hand.

In the last few days before the Rathayātrā, an advance team of devotees visited homes along the route to give residents a chance to invite a chanting party inside the gate, where each family could offer refreshments to the chanters and listen to a short talk about the glories of Lord Caitanya's movement. So many families came forward to do this that the chanting party was stopping at practically every other house on the street.

Somehow, in spite of the centuries of hardship and isolation the Indian expatriates have endured, separated from Mother India by thousands of miles, vestiges of Vedic culture can still be found. As we walked, I noticed holy Tulasī plants growing wild along the road, and at some of the houses Tu-

The Rathayātrā procession (left) moves along a street near the Sri Sri Gaura-Nitai Ashirvad temple. Above, Yauvanānanda Devī Dāsī, the author's wife, helps decorate the festival chariot.

lasī was being cared for and even worshiped. Once, we stopped at a Hindu temple, which we entered with loud chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.* The devotees offered respects to the numerous demigods there, knowing them to be empowered servitors of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Along the way, I saw names such as "Arjune" on roadside billboards. Indeed, the name of the President of Guyana is Bharrat Jagdeo, invoking remembrance of the name of Mahārāja Bharata, son of Lord Ṛṣabhadeva, for whom this planet earth is named Bhārata-varṣa in the Vedic literature.

Searching for Gold But Finding Poison

In many respects, however, Guyana is afflicted by the ignorance and miseries of Kali-yuga, the present age of quarrel and hypocrisy. One of its most popular export products is rum, and I saw numerous signs announcing "Rum Shoppe." Early Indian immigrants were sometimes lured to Guyana by the prospect of discovering El Dorado, the fabled city of gold that Spanish conquistadors had searched for throughout the Americas. Now there is a brand of rum by the same name, bringing suffering to the local population in the form of alcoholism and related social ills. For the Guyanese, the fabled gold of El Dorado has turned into a real poison.

And then there is the matter of race relations. There are long-standing tensions between the Asian Indians and black people, dating back to the complete disenfranchisement of slaves by their former colonial captors when they were replaced on the plantations by indentured servants from India. Ever since Guyana gained independence, there has been a see-saw struggle between the two groups for control of the national government,

(*please turn to page 39*)

Origins of Disciplic Succession

A full explanation of the roots of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement means going all the way back to the creation.

by Satyarāja Dāsa

AS A FRIEND to various scholars who teach Hinduism and the culture of South Asia, I am sometimes asked to sit in as a guest lecturer to tell undergraduates about my experiences with the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and the traditions of the East. When such an opportunity arises, I am always quick to explain the differences between sectarian religion, such as Hinduism, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which represents the *philosophia perennis*, or the abiding truth underlying all religious traditions. In India, this truth is called *sanātana-dharma,* or the eternal function of the soul, and it stands quite a distance from contemporary Hinduism.

Invariably, I am asked how the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement originated, and this leads to a discussion about the creation of the universe and the beginning of religion as we know it today.

Why would a question about the genesis of a modern-day movement evolve into a discussion of primal origins? Consider my usual response to a student who wants to know where the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement began: "If I had to pick a point in time when the movement originated, I would say that it came into being with *catur-mukha* Brahmā, or the four-headed engineer of the universe, the first created entity at the dawn of creation." Clear things up a bit?

Naturally, since most people are unaware of the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and, owing to lack of knowledge, equate it with Hinduism, I begin by explaining how the origins of Hinduism are shrouded in mystery, and that its roots are found in *sanātana-dharma.* I explain that unlike the other world religions, Hinduism cannot be traced to a single founder; it is in fact a medley of different religious traditions, with Vaiṣṇavism at its core. I then explain what Vaiṣṇavism is: the worship of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, in any of His diverse manifestations, including Kṛṣṇa, His original manifestation. This truth is at the heart of *sanātana-dharma* and was revealed to the first created being, Brahmā.

When Brahmā first appeared, I tell them, he brought with him Vedic knowledge. Lord Viṣṇu, God, the orig-

Painting by Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa

Lord Brahmā, the first spiritual master in the universe, passes on the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa to Nārada Muni, Brahmā's son and disciple.

Lord Viṣṇu reclines on the coils of a thousand-hooded serpent, Śeṣa, who gently rocks Him back and forth, anticipating His primary act of creation.

• • •

inal creator, gave Brahmā glimpses of reality and of the spiritual world, as well as information on how to live in this world. This knowledge was handed down, from teacher to student, in an esoteric lineage. I let them know that, in a sense, I am now allowing them entrance into this esoteric tradition. This is how *paramparā*, or disciplic succession, works: I'm introducing the students to what I learned from Śrīla Prabhupāda, who learned from his teacher, on back to Brahmā.

The wisdom tradition has a long history, and by this point the students want to know more. Mindful of the academic setting, I explain what little the world knows about "Hindu" origins: In the 1920s the remains of an ancient Indus Valley Civilization was discovered in the heart of India. The ancient ruins share a unique position with Mesopotamia, China, and Egypt as one of the four earliest civilizations known to man. It is estimated as existing from 3,000 BCE to 1,800 BCE, but has roots extending into the Neolithic Period, 7,000–6,000 BCE. In its heyday (to hear modern historians tell it) the Indus Valley was surprisingly advanced, with planned cities, agriculture, writing, architecture, and so on. Her first excavated sites were on the Indus River, in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, which explains how the civilization received its current name. At its height, which scholars say came in 2,200 BCE, the Indus Civilization boasted an area larger than Europe.

And yet, what do we really know about it? Actually, we know very little. The most promising find includes an ancient form of script, but it is totally indecipherable. Theories, of course, are put forward regularly: Some say the script is a form of early Aryan (Indo-Iranian or Indo-European). Others propose that it is part of the Munda family of languages, spoken largely in eastern India and related to some Southeast Asian dialects. And, still others—in what is perhaps the most popular of all such theories—say it is from the Dravidian family of languages, from South India. But no one really knows. The imagination runs wild over the potential ramifications of an accurate decipherment. For now, and for the last seventy years of countless scholars hopelessly groping at the marred artifacts, they are merely fragments of a forgotten culture. Add to this the now severely doubted Aryan Invasion Theory,* which asserts that the Indus Valley was intruded upon by outside invaders sometime in the second millennium BCE, and it becomes clear that the world of scholarship has offered precious little in the way of Hindu origins.

Insight from Inside the Tradition

Given this lacuna of information, I tell the students, it becomes all the more important to see what the Vedic tradition says about itself.

The universe is repeatedly created and destroyed. In the beginning, we learn, before time and space, there is only Viṣṇu, the primordial being, fabulously majestic with four arms, long, raven black hair, and an exquisitely beautiful dark hue. He alone exists, but with a purpose. From His kingly terrain in the never-ending spiritual world, He creates a cloud in the sky. In its shade He actualizes a great ocean. The water of that ocean is transcendental—liquid spirituality. It is from here, say Vaiṣṇava texts, that the material world comes into being. It is therefore called "the waters of creation." In the coolness of these very waters, Viṣṇu lies down to sleep. While in this restful condition, submerged in the water, He begins to breathe deep, steady breaths, and with these, time comes into being. Eons pass. Then, as He continues breathing, bubble-like universes emanate from His divine body, waiting in their turn to become innumerable worlds.

As these transcendent bubbles ease away from Him, they are not divorced from His essential being. Rather, He expands into numerous secondary Viṣṇu forms, almost identical to His original image in cosmic slumber, and enters into each of them. Now in each universe, with the basic elements of matter present in some preliminary form, He reclines on the coils of a thousand-hooded serpent, Śeṣa, who gently rocks Him back and forth, anticipating His primary act of creation. To accomplish this end, Viṣṇu emits from His navel a magnificent lotus that grows and blossoms into a whorl with a thousand petals. Atop that whorl, Brahmā, the first created being, makes his appearance into the world of three dimensions. He is Viṣṇu's first offspring, chosen to create all the rest.

Brahmā is born as an adult, but he sees only darkness. The sun has not yet been created, nor the moon. There is no one and nothing around him. He looks to his right, to his left, in front

(*please turn to page 33*)

* The Aryan Invasion Theory, which argues that the *Vedas* were brought into India by nomads from some outside region, perhaps from Central Asia, or the Arctic, or southeastern Europe—no one really knows—has been systematically dismantled in several recent scholarly studies. See especially Edwin F. Bryant, *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture: The Indo-Aryan Migration Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Klaus Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994, reprint).

Yamarāja Dāsa

Tampa Rathayātrā parade, 2005

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION: ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with “drama”)

An Encounter with ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

An invitation to an Indian festival leads to the meeting of a lifetime.

by Ramakar

IT WAS THE summer of 1973 in London, England. A friend invited me to accompany him to an Indian festival, a procession that was going from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. I was living only a few miles away, so I decided to go and check it out.

I had no idea what to expect. My only experience of Indian culture had been in restaurants, art museums, books, and the Beatles. I loved Indian music, especially the way the Beatles combined it with modern pop sounds. It was because of the music that my friend had invited me.

I was supposed to meet him at Marble Arch, near Hyde Park Corner, the famous "Speaker's Corner," as it has come to be known because of its many orators taking advantage

In the early 1970s, Śrīla Prabhupāda rides on the chariot during a Rathayātrā festival in London.

of their right to free speech. He never showed, though. As I waited, I stood nearby watching as the huge carts were being readied for the procession. Many devotees were decorating them with flowers. There were thousands of flowers—beautiful bright colors. I watched a few feet from the front wheels of the first cart as the devotees raised the center-piece high into the sky. It formed the shape of an ancient Indian temple in bright red.

Pulled into the Action

As I was standing there, a big, black limousine arrived and out stepped an elderly Indian gentlemen dressed in orange robes. He wore a garland of flowers, as did his associates who exited the limo after him. He stood right next to me. Then, without wasting any time, he bent down and picked up from the ground the thick, heavy rope attached to the cart. He then looked at me, reached out, and grabbed my shirt round about the heart. He pulled me over and told me to get ahold of the rope like him and pull and not let go until I had reached the destination. Many others had also picked up the rope, and we were now all pulling together. Slowly, statefully, the cart began to move, out of Hyde Park and Marble Arch down along busy Oxford Street, one of the most intense shopping areas of London.

I was behind the Indian gentleman as we walked and pulled. I had no idea who he was. I thought he was a wealthy businessman because of the limo. I asked him what this was all about. I don't remember the exact words he used, but I remember that he tried to explain the Jagannātha festival to me. At the time I was very skeptical about religion in general and was full of questions. I asked why he and the others were chanting. He explained. We were passing by a large overhead sign on the side of a building advertizing Wrigley's chewing gum. I said that if we were to chant "Wrigley's Chewing Gum" over and over it would induce us to want that product. He patiently answered that chewing gum was material, illusory, and so it's pointless to worship it. He explained that they were singing the names of God, who is real, and that these are transcendental, spiritual sounds.

At this point he was whisked away by his associates, and he departed from my company. I thought about what he'd said as I continued to pull the cart. We pulled it down to Tottenham Court Road, turned right, and went down to Trafalgar Square. It was quite a long walk even without pulling a large cart. As we went, more and more people joined the parade. Many stood on the sidewalks, watching.

The Speaker of the Day

The streets had been blocked off from traffic. I began to see what a big deal this was. We pulled the cart to its destination at Trafalgar Square. The pulling party dispersed into the crowd that was completely filling the huge square and the streets around it. I stuck around to see what was going to happen on the platform in the middle of the square. I was completely amazed, to say the least, when I saw that the rich Indian gentleman I had been talking with earlier was the speaker of the day. Seated on a dais, he talked about Kṛṣṇa. I asked someone nearby who he was, and I was told his name but I couldn't remember it: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. I do remember that I was told he was the spiritual leader of all the devotees there and many more throughout the world. Wow! I was blown away by the fact that he'd taken the time to talk to me and instruct me so patiently even though he was number one here.

It wasn't until much later and I'd more fully realized who Śrīla Prabhupāda is that I understood what a great blessing had been bestowed on me. He personally pulled me out of the ocean of nescience into the lifeboat of Kṛṣṇa consiousness. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my friend and well-wisher.

My encounter with Prabhupāda is a great example of how Kṛṣṇa loves to be merciful. He is so kind. I was in darkness, asleep but ready to wake up, and I did and continue to do so. I never met Śrīla Praphupāda again, but I'll never forget that walk I took with him that day in London.

Originally from Scotland, Ramakar now lives with his family in Yoncalla, Oregon. He is a musician and songwriter, and his CDs are available at zebraovergroundrecords.com.

Three Rathayātrā chariots roll through central London during a festival in a year prior to the one on the previous spread.

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to www.krishna.com/calendar.

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in his disciplic succession.

Month of Madhusūdana
(April 14–May 13)

MAY

6—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Lord Rāmacandra. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Jāhnavā Devī, the consort of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Madhu Paṇḍita, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

9—Mohinī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Rukmiṇī Dvādaśī, the appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, the consort of Lord Kṛṣṇa as Dvārakādhīśa, the Lord of Dvārakā.

11—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayānanda Prabhu, a dedicated disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda who helped him bring the Rathayātrā festival to the Western world.

12—Nṛsiṁha Caturdaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa's half-man, half-lion incarnation. Fasting till dusk, followed by feasting.

Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva

13—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a follower of the six Gosvāmīs. Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master (Īśvara Purī).

Month of Trivikrama
(May 14–June 11)

18—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya, an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya.

23—Aparā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

24—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura, the author of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata,* a biography on Lord Caitanya.

JUNE

6—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, a prominent spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (disciplic succession), and the author of *Govinda-bhāṣya,* an important commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra.* Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Gaṅgāmātā Gosvāmiṇī, a prominent woman spiritual master in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya.*

7—Pāṇḍava Nirjalā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

Month of Vāmana
(June 12–July 11)

12—Disappearance of Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, one of the principal followers of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

20—Disappearance anniversary of Śrī Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya.

21—Yoginī Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

25—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gadādhara Paṇḍita, one of the principal associates of Lord Caitanya. Also, disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

26—Guṇḍicā-mārjana. Festival of cleansing the Gundicha temple in Jagannatha Puri, India.

27—Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā in Jagannatha Puri. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena, intimate associates of Lord Caitanya.

JULY

7— Śayanā Ekādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans.

11—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

"POWER TO THE PEOPLE"

(*continued from page 15*)

Therefore, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, *paramo nirmatsarāṇāṁ satām:* Kṛṣṇa consciousness is for the perfect, nonenvious person. Those who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious must be envious. Everywhere you'll find competition. Kṛṣṇa had enemies. Jesus Christ had enemies, or else why was he crucified? He had no fault; he was preaching God consciousness. Yet he was crucified.

This is the material world. Even though one is perfect, still he'll have enemies. How can you stop it? They say, "Give the power to the people," but as soon as there is one good group of people governing, another group will stand against it. They will say, "Give the power to us." So where is your perfection? This is not perfection. Therefore, we have to give up all connection with this material world—that is perfection.

Disciple: But how can you avoid anarchy and have good government if you give up all connection with this world?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, this is the point—you have to follow the perfect authority.

Disciple: And this was their contention—you advocate following a superior authority.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: If you want a perfect society, you must follow the perfect authority. You cannot find perfection through mundane politics. You have to follow the real, recognized authorities—the perfect, liberated souls.

This was the system in the Vedic culture. The authority was Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Vedic literature, and society was directed by Manu [the forefather and lawgiver of mankind] and the *Manu-saṁhitā. Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ:* To attain perfection we must follow the *mahājanas*—perfect, self-realized authorities.

Disciple: But these young people said even spiritual authorities are imperfect.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: They may say that, but why should we accept their opinion—the opinion of imperfect rascals? Their only idea of authority is "Might makes right." For instance, that group yesterday was advocating "Power to the people." So they have got some might, and they are pressuring, "You must accept this idea." And this is going on all over the world—"Might makes right." All the rascals are fighting with one another, and the one who is a little mightier becomes prominent. That's all.

Disciple: They say this is always the case with any authority. It's just some leader who has pushed himself forward. So they've rejected all authorities.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, because all their so-called authorities have been imperfect. But there is a perfect authority also: Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And any authority who follows and teaches according to the instructions of Kṛṣṇa is also perfect. That is authority. We Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees are exactly following the authority of Kṛṣṇa. In presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we are simply presenting the words of Kṛṣṇa and trying to convince people, "Here is the real authority; if you follow you'll be happy." Kṛṣṇa says, "You surrender unto Me." And we are saying, "Surrender to Kṛṣṇa." We know that Kṛṣṇa is perfect and that to surrender unto Him is perfection. And whenever we speak, we always quote Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's representatives.

Disciple: But for someone to surrender, doesn't he have to have faith in whoever is asking him to surrender?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, faith must be there. Therefore, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa first of all proves that He is the Absolute Truth; then He asks for you to surrender. But you need to have the intelligence to understand—"This is Kṛṣṇa"—then you surrender. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa does not say in the beginning, "You must surrender." First He explains everything—the body, the soul, all forms of yoga, all different kinds of knowledge. Then He gives the most confidential knowledge: "Give up everything else, and just surrender unto Me."

Everyone in the material world is imperfect. Without voluntary submission to a perfect person, everyone is imperfect. But one who has completely surrendered to Kṛṣṇa or His representative is perfect. If you do not surrender to the perfect authority, however, then you remain an imperfect rascal. You may be Napoleon, or you may be a small ant, but we want to see whether you have surrendered to Kṛṣṇa or not. If not, then you're a rascal, that's all.

DO YOU LIVE FAR FROM A TEMPLE?

There may be Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees near you who hold regular get-togethers or want to start them. We don't have room for these gatherings on the Centers list we print in the magazine, but our online list includes many of them. To find out if there's a regular Kṛṣṇa conscious program near you, or to list your own, log on to Krishna.com and click on "Address List" on the home page.

DISCIPLIC SUCCESSION

(*continued from page 26*)

and behind. Looking in all directions with such intensity, four heads suddenly appear in place of his one. But even with this increased capacity, he sees nothing and cannot understand the empty world around him or his purpose in it.

He decides to climb down the lotus stem, hoping to solve the mystery of his origin. As he cautiously moves down the newly created stalk, he sees a creation in progress—swirling indications of worlds unformed, inchoate planets. With all of this, something stirs deep inside of him. He begins to intuit his reason for being, his inborn purpose, his service to Viṣṇu. He is meant to create. This he knows. But he is not sure how to approach his task. Then, deeply contemplating the job before him, he prays for some indication of how to proceed. Frustrated, with little more than a vague sense of what he has to do, he turns and begins his long journey back up the lotus stem.

Suddenly, in answer to his prayer, he hears two syllables: *ta-pa.* Listening intently, he hears them again—*ta-pa*—and his course becomes a bit clearer. The word means "penance." And he understands by this that the Lord is giving him a message: To serve the Lord in such a pivotal way, to assist in creation, will require that he qualify himself by deep meditation, and by developing a profound sense of austerity. Now fully ensconced in his high lotus cradle, he sits with legs folded in yogic posture, back erect, meditating on the task ahead.

After one thousand celestial years, Brahmā's meditation breaks. He now knows what to do and how to do it. His deep concentration has given him a vision of the spiritual world, where his beloved Viṣṇu resides. For Brahmā, the borders of the material and spiritual worlds melt away, and he sees reality in all its beauty.

Overwhelmed by the Lord's form, nature, and brilliance, by His wonderful associates and environment, Brahmā composes hundreds of verses, which are later compiled in a book known as the *Brahma-saṁhitā*. Then, regaining composure, he turns his attention to the mission at hand. From his mind issue forth progeny, and from them an impressive array of species to fill the planets, the waters, and the skies.

Of all Brahmā's initial sons, Nārada is most dear, and perhaps most important in our present context. Brahmā explains to him the truth of the spiritual realm and asks him to share this with the multitudes who now populate the world. Eons go by, and Nārada's mission finds its greatest success when he conveys the message to Vyāsa, who puts Vedic truths in written form, compiling knowledge that has been passed down orally for millennia. Vyāsa takes the one original *Veda* and divided it into four, and these he edits for ease of understanding. Further, he compiles the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* to give the essence of Vedic truth, unclear in the prior works. Each of these he entrusts to scholars of impeccable character, and they in turn teach the texts to their disciples and grand-disciples. Thus the respective schools of Vedic thought are established. These, of course, eventually give rise to Hinduism as we know it today.

The esoteric lineages continue to pass down the essential core of Vedic truth. One lineage is Brahmā to Nārada to Vyasa, on down to Śrīla Prabhupāda, the founder/*ācārya* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Śiva, the *deva* in charge of universal destruction, is the founder of a lineage known as the Rudra-sampradāya. Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune and wife of Viṣṇu, founds yet another. And the four Kumāras, celibate sons of Brahmā, another. These four lines of disciplic descent are systematized by Madhvācārya, Viṣṇusvāmī, Rāmānuja, and Nimbarka, respectively, the best of great teacher-saints from medieval India. In India today—and, by the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda, throughout the world—those who know the ancient traditions well do not learn about Vedic knowledge from schoolbooks or from stories passed down by their grandmothers. Rather, if one is serious about the spiritual pursuit, one approaches a teacher in disciplic succession and studies under him in earnest. Nor is it simply about study, but

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about living one's life in such a way that truth opens up, like Brahmā's lotus in the beginning of creation.

KNOWLEDGE BY SINCERITY OF HEART

The students now sense that I am not exactly in line with their teachers at the university, that there is something else at play here.

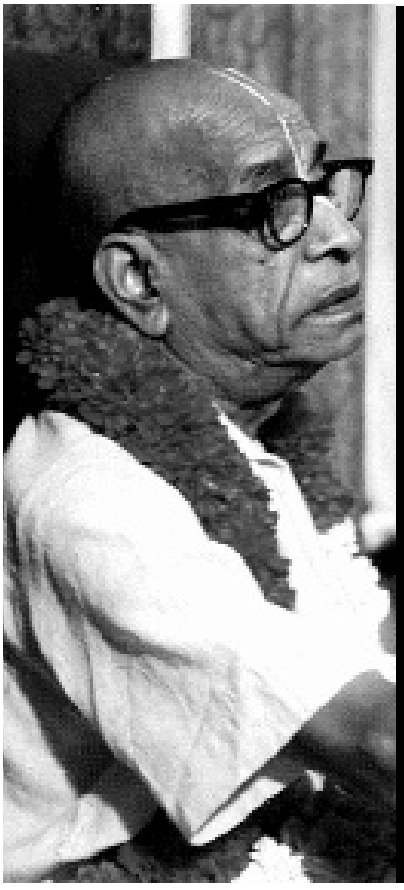
"Yes," I say, "religious truth cannot be understood by mere intellectuality or cerebral word games. You cannot learn this by mastering Sanskrit or getting a Ph.D. These things are laudable, and might even be helpful along the way for some. But the real thing is a sincere heart, being willing to submit to a spiritual teacher, with a sense of reverence and an attitude of service, to learn from someone who knows—not merely one who has book learning, but one who *knows.*

To enter into the truths of transcendence, one must be willing, like Brahmā, to see beyond the darkness through submission to the Lord. We cannot meditate for a thousand celestial years, as Brahmā did. But if we can cry out to God once, with full sincerity, we can achieve what Brahmā achieved: knowledge of who we are and what we are meant to do. That is why in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement we emphasize the chanting of the *mahā-mantra:* Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. We beseech the Lord to kindly let us serve Him: "O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in your holy service." In the beginning was the Word, I tell them, and to end our stay in the material world, the Word plays a role too.

I sum up by explaining that there is much we can learn from the Brahmā story. In addition to telling us something about cosmic creation, the story provides a metaphor for man's spiritual journey. We are born in ignorance, which is like the darkness of Brahmā's uncreated worlds. Like him, we must determinedly question our identity and purpose. And when we hear the call of the Lord, we must be willing to meditate and to perform austerities, to do whatever it takes to reach our goal. If we do so, we are then part of the Brahmā lineage.

Finally, I tell them that while this creation story about Viṣṇu and Brahmā might appear mythological, it gives us a sense of primal origins, about the otherworldly existence beyond the material sphere—about ultimate reality. In other words, it tells us about a reality more substantive than the so-called real world, and thus it stands a long distance from anything approaching mythology. And if we consider the undeciphered script of the Indus Valley and the innumerable questions surrounding the Aryan Invasion Theory, it becomes clear that there is no counter theory at all. There is only truth, as revealed by the scriptures and God Himself.

Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor. He has written over twenty books. He lives with his wife and daughter near New York City.



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Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BRAHMĀ PETITIONS LORD ŚIVA

Brahmā continues to praise the exalted character of Lord Śiva and asks him to deliver Dakṣa and others from the harm they suffered at Dakṣa's ill-fated sacrifice.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 6

45 त्वं कर्मणां मङ्गल मङ्गलानां
कर्तुः स्वलोकं तनुषे स्वेः परं वा
अमङ्गलाना च तमिस्रमुल्बणं
विपर्ययः केन तदेव कस्यचित्

tvaṁ karmaṇāṁ maṅgala maṅgalānāṁ
kartuḥ sva-lokaṁ tanuṣe svaḥ paraṁ vā
amaṅgalānāṁ ca tamisram ulbaṇaṁ
viparyayaḥ kena tad eva kasyacit

tvam—Your Lordship; *karmaṇām*—of the prescribed duties; *maṅgala*—O most auspicious; *maṅgalānām*—of the auspicious; *kartuḥ*—of the performer; *sva-lokam*—respective higher planetary systems; *tanuṣe*—expand; *svaḥ*—heavenly planets; *param*—transcendental world; *vā*—or; *amaṅgalānām*—of the inauspicious; *ca*—and; *tamisram*—the name of a particular hell; *ulbaṇam*—ghastly; *viparyayaḥ*—the opposite; *kena*—why; *tat eva*—certainly that; *kasyacit*—for someone.

O most auspicious lord, you have ordained the heavenly planets, the spiritual Vaikuṇṭha planets, and the impersonal Brahman sphere as the respective destinations of the performers of auspicious activities. Similarly, for others, who are miscreants, you have destined different kinds of hells which are horrible and ghastly. Yet sometimes it is found that their destinations are just the opposite. It is very difficult to ascertain the cause of this.

PURPORT: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is called the supreme will. It is by the supreme will that everything is happening. It is said, therefore, that not a blade of grass moves without the supreme will. Generally it is prescribed that performers of pious activities are promoted to the higher planetary systems, devotees are promoted to the Vaikuṇṭhas, or spiritual worlds, and impersonal speculators are promoted to the impersonal Brahman effulgence; but it sometimes so happens that a miscreant like Ajāmila is immediately promoted to Vaikuṇṭhaloka simply by chanting the name of Nārāyaṇa. Although when Ajāmila

uttered this vibration he intended to call his son Nārāyaṇa, Lord Nārāyaṇa took it seriously and immediately gave him promotion to Vaikuṇṭhaloka, despite his background, which was full of sinful activities. Similarly King Dakṣa was always engaged in the pious activities of performing sacrifices, yet simply because of creating a little misunderstanding with Lord Śiva, he was severely taken to task.

The conclusion is, therefore, that the supreme will is the ultimate judgment; no one can argue upon this. A pure devotee therefore submits in all circumstances to the supreme will of the Lord, accepting it as all-auspicious.

tat te 'nukampāṁ susamīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vapurbhir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk
(*Bhāg.* 10.14.8)

❶ The purport of this verse is that when a devotee is in a calamitous condition he takes it as a benediction of the Supreme Lord and takes responsibility himself for his past misdeeds. In such a condition, he offers still more devotional service and is not disturbed. ❷ One who lives in such a disposition of mind, engaged in devotional service, is the most eligible candidate for promotion to the spiritual world. In other words, such a devotee's claim for promotion to the spiritual world is assured in all circumstances.

46 न वै सतां त्वच्चरणार्पितात्मनां
भूतेषु सर्वेष्वभिपश्यतां तव
भूतानि चात्मन्यपृथग्ददृक्षतां
प्रायेण रोषोऽभिभवेद्यथा पशुम्

na vai satāṁ tvac-caraṇārpitātmanāṁ
bhūteṣu sarveṣv abhipaśyatāṁ tava
bhūtāni cātmany apṛthag-didṛkṣatāṁ
prāyeṇa roṣo 'bhibhaved yathā paśum

na—not; *vai*—but; *satām*—of the devotees; *tvat-caraṇa-arpita-ātmanām*—of those who are completely surrendered at your lotus feet; *bhūteṣu*—among living entities; *sarveṣu*—all varieties; *abhipaśyatām*—perfectly seeing; *tava*—your; *bhūtāni*—living entities; *ca*—and; *ātmani*—in the Supreme; *apṛthak*—nondifferent; *didṛkṣatām*—those who see like that; *prāyeṇa*—almost always; *roṣaḥ*—anger; *abhibhavet*—takes place; *yathā*—exactly like; *paśum*—the animals.

My dear Lord, devotees who have fully dedicated their lives unto your lotus feet certainly observe your presence as Paramātmā in each and every being, and as such they do not differentiate between one living being and another. Such persons treat all living entities equally. They never become overwhelmed by anger like animals, who can see nothing without differentiation.

PURPORT: ❸ When the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes angry or kills a demon, materially this may appear unfavorable, but spiritually it is a blissful blessing upon him. Therefore pure devotees do not make any distinction between the Lord's anger and His blessings. They see both with reference to the Lord's behavior with others and themselves. A devotee does not find fault with the behavior of the Lord in any circumstances.

(1) How does a devotee of the Lord respond to being in a calamitous condition?
(2) What is the result of the devotee's being in an undisturbed state of mind?
(3) Why do pure devotees not make any distinction between the Lord's anger and His blessings?

47 पृथग्धियः कर्मदृशो दुराशयाः
परोदयेनार्पितहृद्रुजोऽनिशम्
परान् दुरुक्तैर्वितुदन्त्यरुन्तुदा-
स्तान्मावधीद्दैववधान् भवद्विधः

pṛthag-dhiyaḥ karma-dṛśo durāśayāḥ
parodayenārpita-hṛd-rujo 'niśam
parān duruktair vitudanty aruntudās
tān māvadhīd daiva-vadhān bhavad-vidhaḥ

pṛthak—differently; *dhiyaḥ*—those who are thinking; *karma*—fruitive activities; *dṛśaḥ*—observer; *durāśayāḥ*—mean minded; *para-udayena*—by others' flourishing condition; *arpita*—given up; *hṛt*—heart; *rujaḥ*—anger; *aniśam*—always; *parān*—others; *duruktaiḥ*—harsh words; *vitudanti*—gives pain; *aruntudāḥ*—by piercing words; *tān*—unto them; *mā*—not; *avadhīt*—kill; *daiva*—by providence; *vadhān*—already killed; *bhavat*—you; *vidhaḥ*—like.

Persons who observe everything with differentiation, who are simply attached to fruitive activities, who are mean minded, who are always pained to see the flourishing condition of others, and who thus give distress to them by uttering harsh and piercing words have already been killed by providence. Thus there is no need for them to be killed again by an exalted personality like you.

PURPORT: Persons who are materialistic and always engaged in fruitive activities for material profit cannot

endure seeing the flourishing life of others. Except for a few persons in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the entire world is full of such envious persons, who are perpetually full of anxieties because they are attached to the material body and are without self-realization. (4) Since their hearts are always filled with anxiety, it is understood that they have already been killed by providence. Thus Lord Śiva, as a self-realized Vaiṣṇava, was advised not to kill Dakṣa.

(5) A Vaiṣṇava is described as *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* because although he is never distressed in any condition of life, he is distressed to see others in a distressed condition. Vaiṣṇavas, therefore, should not try to kill by any action of the body or mind, but should try to revive the Kṛṣṇa consciousness of others out of compassion for them. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has been started to deliver the envious persons of the world from the clutches of *māyā,* and even though devotees are sometimes put into trouble, they push on the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in all tolerance. Lord Caitanya advises:

tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

"One can chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking himself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than the tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respects to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly." (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3)

A Vaiṣṇava should follow the examples of such Vaiṣṇavas as Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Nityānanda Prabhu, and also Lord Jesus Christ. There is no need to kill anyone who has already been killed. But it should be noted herewith that a Vaiṣṇava should not tolerate the blaspheming of Viṣṇu or Vaiṣṇavas, although he should tolerate personal insults to himself.

48 यस्मिन् यदा पुष्करनाभमायया
दुरन्तया स्पृष्टधियः पृथग्दृशः
कुर्वन्ति तत्र ह्यनुकम्पया कृपां
न साधवो दैवबलात्कृते क्रमम्

yasmin yadā puṣkara-nābha-māyayā
durantayā spṛṣṭa-dhiyaḥ pṛthag-dṛśaḥ
kurvanti tatra hy anukampayā kṛpāṁ
na sādhavo daiva-balāt kṛte kramam

yasmin—in some place; *yadā*—when; *puṣkara-nābha-māyayā*—by the illusory energy of Puṣkaranābha, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *durantayā*—insurmountable; *spṛṣṭa-dhiyaḥ*—bewildered; *pṛthak-dṛśaḥ*—the same persons who see differently; *kurvanti*—do; *tatra*—there; *hi*—certainly; *anukampayā*—out of compassion; *kṛpām*—mercy; *na*—never; *sādhavaḥ*—saintly persons; *daiva-balāt*—by providence; *kṛte*—being done; *kramam*—prowess.

My dear lord, if in some places materialists, who are already bewildered by the insurmountable illusory energy of the Supreme Godhead, sometimes commit offenses, a saintly person, with compassion, does not take this seriously. Knowing that they commit offenses because they are overpowered by the illusory energy, he does not show his prowess to counteract them.

PURPORT: (6) It is said that the beauty of a *tapasvī,* or saintly person, is forgiveness. There are many instances in the spiritual history of the world in which many saintly persons, although unnecessarily harassed, did not take action, although they could have done so. Parīkṣit Mahārāja, for example, was unnecessarily cursed by a *brāhmaṇa* boy, and this was very much regretted by the boy's father, but Parīkṣit Mahārāja accepted the curse and agreed to die within a week as the *brāhmaṇa* boy desired. Parīkṣit Mahārāja was the emperor and was full in power both spiritually and materially, but out of compassion and out of respect for the *brāhmaṇa* community, he did not counteract the action of the *brāhmaṇa* boy but agreed to die within seven days. (7) Because it was desired by Kṛṣṇa that Parīkṣit Mahārāja agree to the punishment so that the instruction of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* would thus be revealed to the world, Parīkṣit Mahārāja was advised not to take action. A Vaiṣṇava is personally tolerant for the benefit of others. When he does not show his prowess, this does not mean that he is lacking in strength; rather, it indicates that he is tolerant for the welfare of the entire human society.

49 भवांस्तु पुंसः परमस्य मायया
दुरन्तयास्पृष्टमतिः समस्तदृक्

(4) Why are envious persons considered to have already been killed by providence?
(5) Why is a Vaiṣṇava is described as *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*?
(6) What is said to be the beauty of a saintly person?
(7) Why did Parīkṣit Mahārāja not take action against the *brāhmaṇa* boy who cursed him?

तया हतात्मस्वनुकर्मचेतः-
स्वनुग्रहं कर्तुमिहार्हसि प्रभो

bhavāṁs tu puṁsaḥ paramasya māyayā
durantayāspṛṣṭa-matiḥ samasta-dṛk
tayā hatātmasv anukarma-cetaḥsv
anugrahaṁ kartum ihārhasi prabho

bhavān—Your Lordship; *tu*—but; *puṁsaḥ*—of the person; *paramasya*—the supreme; *māyayā*—by the material energy; *durantayā*—of great potency; *aspṛṣṭa*—unaffected; *matiḥ*—intelligence; *samasta-dṛk*—seer or knower of everything; *tayā*—by the same illusory energy; *hata-ātmasu*—bewildered at heart; *anukarma-cetaḥsu*—whose hearts are attracted by fruitive activities; *anugraham*—mercy; *kartum*—to do; *iha*—in this case; *arhasi*—desire; *prabho*—O lord.

My dear lord, you are never bewildered by the formidable influence of the illusory energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore you are omniscient and should be merciful and compassionate toward those who are bewildered by the same illusory energy and are very much attached to fruitive activities.

PURPORT: ❽ A Vaiṣṇava is never bewildered by the influence of the external energy because he is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The Lord states in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14):

daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etāṁ taranti te

"My divine energy consisting of the three modes of material nature is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it." ❾ A Vaiṣṇava should take care of those who are bewildered by this *māyā* instead of becoming angry with them, because without a Vaiṣṇava's mercy they have no way to get out of the clutches of *māyā*. Those who have been condemned by *māyā* are rescued by the mercy of devotees.

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They are just like desire trees who can fulfill the desires of everyone, and they are full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls." ❿ Those who are under the influence of the illusory energy are attracted to fruitive activities, but a Vaiṣṇava preacher attracts their hearts to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(8) Why is a Vaiṣṇava never bewildered by the influence of the external energy?
(9) Why should a Vaiṣṇava take care of those who are bewildered by *māyā*?
(10) How does a Vaiṣṇava deliver persons from the influence of the illusory energy?

50 कुर्वध्वरस्योद्धरणं हतस्य भोः
त्वयासमाप्तस्य मनो प्रजापतेः
न यत्र भागं तव भागिनो ददुः
कुयाजिनो येन मखो निनीयते

kurv adhvarasyoddharaṇaṁ hatasya bhoḥ
tvayāsamāptasya mano prajāpateḥ
na yatra bhāgaṁ tava bhāgino daduḥ
kuyājino yena makho ninīyate

kuru—just execute; *adhvarasya*—of the sacrifice; *uddharaṇam*—complete regularly; *hatasya*—killed; *bhoḥ*—O; *tvayā*—by you; *asamāptasya*—of the unfinished sacrifice; *mano*—O Lord Śiva; *prajāpateḥ*—of Mahārāja Dakṣa; *na*—not; *yatra*—where; *bhāgam*—share; *tava*—your; *bhāginaḥ*—deserving to take the share; *daduḥ*—did not give; *ku-yājinaḥ*—bad priests; *yena*—by the bestower; *makhaḥ*—sacrifice; *ninīyate*—gets the result.

My dear Lord Śiva, you are a shareholder of a portion of the sacrifice, and you are the giver of the result. The bad priests did not deliver your share, and therefore you destroyed everything, and the sacrifice remains unfinished. Now you can do the needful and take your rightful share.

51 जीवताद्यजमानोऽयं प्रपद्येताक्षिणी भगः
भृगोः श्मश्रूणि रोहन्तु पूष्णो दन्ताश्च पूर्ववत्

jīvatād yajamāno 'yaṁ
prapadyetākṣiṇī bhagaḥ
bhṛgoḥ śmaśrūṇi rohantu
pūṣṇo dantāś ca pūrvavat

[*continued in the next issue*]

People stopped in their automobiles and came out of homes and stores to see the procession.

• • •

OPENING THE LOTUS
(*continued from page 23*)
and elections have sometimes been marred by street violence.

The Guyanese devotees, therefore, are anxious to bring the transcendental science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to all segments of society to alleviate the suffering that results from misidentifying the self with the material body. For example, they're establishing a center at the university in the capital city of Georgetown. I could just imagine the sensation it would cause to see black and Asian Indian university students happily chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* together.

The devotees of the Lord know the secret to real and lasting friendship—befriending Lord Kṛṣṇa and singing His holy names with love and devotion. As Śrīla Prabhupāda says in his essay "The Real Peace Formula":

> We are searching for a friend to give us peace and tranquility, and that friend is Kṛṣṇa, God. If we would just make friends with Him, we will find that everyone is our friend. God is situated in everyone's heart, and if we make friends with Him, He will dictate from within so that we will be treated in a friendly way. If we make friends with the police commissioner, we will receive some advantages, or if we make friends with the president, so many people will be our friend. Similarly, if we make friends with God, everyone will be our friend. If everyone understands that God is everyone's friend and that He is the supreme proprietor, the world will become peaceful. This is the verdict of Lord Caitanya.

FESTIVAL DAY

As the day of the Rathayātrā festival approached, the devotees' excitement steadily grew. Devotees arrived from neighboring countries such as Trinidad and Suriname, and the ISKCON temple in Williamsburg was buzzing with activity. There were countless flower garlands to make, a festival chariot to decorate, and lots of cooking to be done in anticipation of the throngs of visitors to the festival site.

On the day of the festival, devotees spoke during the morning class about the importance of Jagannātha Rathayātrā. On this special day, the Lord of the universe comes out of His home to give blessings to everyone as He passes along the public roads. Because devotees know this, their yearning to see that all people are blessed by coming in contact with Lord Kṛṣṇa increases to a fever pitch, and they pour their hearts and souls into chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* as the Lord takes His chariot ride.

The five-mile Rathayātrā procession began at 3:00 in the afternoon. The parade route took us along the main coastal road, ending at the ISKCON temple in Williamsburg. The chariot was cleverly designed to allow the canopy to be collapsed using a hand crank, so that the car could pass beneath electrical lines. As the chariot rolled along, pulled by dozens of devotees holding two ropes, exuberant chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* could be heard from groups of devotees in front and behind. All the while, various offerings of food and refreshments were made to Lord Jagannātha and then distributed to the crowd.

In the bustling town of Rosehall, people stopped in their automobiles and came out of homes and stores to see the procession. Devotees distributed hundreds of invitational flyers, and many people followed the chariot back to the temple for the evening's festivities. There they heard devotees such as Nārada Ṛṣi Dāsa and Rājarṣi Dāsa speak about the pastimes of Lord Jagannātha, they ate sumptuous vegetarian food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, they joined in the congregational chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names, and they were entertained by Vaiṣṇava youth who depicted how Lord Jagannātha appeared in this world long ago. The countless hours of planning and preparation had paid off in a big way, with thousands of people receiving spiritual benefit.

The day after the festival, I spent an afternoon with some of the older devotees, including Paramātmā Dāsa, Haridāsa Dāsa, and others, who described the history of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Guyana. They recalled the spartan conditions of the early temples, which sometimes were barely more than thatched huts on the banks of a river. They fondly recalled how those simple circumstances brought them close together and made them spiritually strong. In particular, they remembered the efforts of Agraṇī Dāsa, who organized many programs for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a big way. It was clear from these talks that the devotees wanted to see a revival of the intensive outreach efforts of the 1980s.

After many hugs from our new Guyanese friends and repeated assurances that we would return, we caught our flight back to the United States on the following day. The warm and welcoming mood of the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees of Guyana has remained on my mind ever since my visit there. By Kṛṣṇa's grace, I hope I will be able to go back again soon.

Pañca Tattva Dāsa joined ISKCON in 1978, his wife in 1980. Their daughter, Śaraṇāgatī, serves in the customer service department of BTG and Krishna.com.

ONLINE EXTRA

To view more photos and get more information about ISKCON Guyana, please go to krishna.com/403

Progress to Pure

The transforming power of Kṛṣṇa's holy names acts quickly and automatically when we leave behind offenses, illusion, weaknesses, and material desires.

by Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

Yamarāja Dāsa

This is the last in a series of articles on avoiding offenses when trying to progress spiritually by chanting God's holy names. The article expands on the general topic of offenses and ties the parts of the series together.

FOR DAYS I struggled with a high fever. My swollen throat and pounding ear denied me sleep. While clear soup was part of the doctor's prescription, I had no appetite for anything. My weak body couldn't fully assimilate the little I could eat, so although the food was healthful, it didn't give me much strength. But as my health returned with medicine and a special diet, regular meals started to not only taste good but give me much needed energy.

Similarly, when we begin the regulated practice of chanting the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—we generally displease the holy name (which is identical to Kṛṣṇa) in many ways. The holy name, therefore, works to slowly bring us to a state of spiritual health, and once health starts to be restored, the holy name begins to give us the full sustenance of transcendent love for God.

Just as a master neglects an offending servant and shows mercy to a repentant one, so the holy name, if unhappy with our actions, thoughts, and attitudes, may choose not to show His full power. There are a number of ways to offend the holy name. The Sanskrit term for these offenses is *aparādha,* which literally means "without devotional worship," the word for worship being *ārādhanam.*

It is because of these *aparādhas* and other unwanted things in our hearts (*anarthas*) that chanting the holy name may not always be inspiring and full of exultation. Rather, we may feel that we mostly struggle and sometimes stumble on the spiritual path. The scriptures repeatedly inform us that saying Kṛṣṇa's name once is sufficient to destroy all karmic sins and awaken pure, selfless devotion for the Lord. Yet while we can rightly refer to the chanting as scientific in that it produces predictable results, chanting is not a mechanical practice. Kṛṣṇa is a person with feelings. His incarnation in sound, His name, has to want to show Himself to a spiritual aspirant.

Anarthas engender lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy, as well as distress, illusion, hunger, thirst, old age, and death. But the worst effect of *anarthas* is slow or negligible spiritual progress, in spite of practices such as chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. The plant of devotion cannot grow in the presence of *anarthas,* which act like salt in the soil. *Artha* means goal, and *anartha* means an unworthy goal or a hindrance to fulfilling a worthy one. There are four major categories of *anarthas:* illusion, material desires, weaknesses, and offenses, or *aparādhas.* All *anarthas* stem from our envy of the power and opulence of God, alongside the

Chanting

A hallmark of saintly character is to concentrate on the good in others while honestly assessing one's own faults.

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desire for our own recognition. *Anarthas* cause our material bondage and all concomitant misery.

How do we become infected with *anarthas*? They are the results of actions in this and previous lives. Even pious activities can produce *anarthas,* such as a desire for salvation or heavenly pleasure. Sometimes *anarthas* arise when we become distracted, as when our progress in *bhakti* inspires others to respect us and we delight in such admiration. And while offenses to the holy name are *anarthas* themselves, if not eliminated they produce the other types of *anarthas* as well.

Illusions

When I first became determined to devote my life to serving Lord Kṛṣṇa, my mother was aghast at my distain for the ordinary goals of family, money, security, and career. At one point, sobbing, she declared, "But you're too young to be disillusioned!" She didn't understand that our illusions prevent us from the ever-expanding bliss of loving God. We think we are the body or mind rather than the soul. We may imagine God to be only all-pervasive light, neglecting His supreme personal feature. The material world may seem to be a place of pleasure, and we may mistake rituals, philanthropy, and so forth, for the process of spiritual perfection.

While these kinds of illusion are certainly obstacles, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa along with receiving instructions from both scriptures and a bona fide guru will quickly awaken us to the reality of ourselves, God, nature, and spiritual life.

Weakness of Heart

Weaknesses are a more difficult *anartha* to overcome. Though desire for fame or recognition is the cause of all *anarthas,* it can also be classified as an internal weakness. To help us cut this weed at the root, Kṛṣṇa tells us we must do service—even menial service—for devotees of the Lord. Throughout Vaiṣṇava history, spiritual aspirants have received Kṛṣṇa's mercy through such service. King Prataparudra worked as a street sweeper in front of Kṛṣṇa's chariot in the Rathayātrā festival. Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanya's spiritual master, cleaned his invalid guru's bodily wastes. And Śrīla Prabhupāda's exemplary disciple Jayānanda Dāsa took garbage to the dump.

Envy is another of the heart's weaknesses. Instead of envying others, we should desire their welfare and share our spiritual wealth. Kṛṣṇa will also remain hidden from one who is deceitful or fault finding. A hallmark of saintly character is to concentrate on the good in others while honestly assessing one's own faults.

Material Desires And Attachments

Through absorption in Kṛṣṇa's wonderful form, qualities, and activities, we rid ourselves of the weakness of attachment to things not related to Him. These include not only objects that may attract us, but also seemingly worthwhile goals such as heavenly comforts, mystic powers, and salvation. The story of Ulysses in Greek literature provides a useful analogy to our attempt to overcome material desires. Witches on a desert island would entrap sailors and devour them. When hearing the witches sing, the sailors envisioned them as enchanting beauties in a paradise. But when the sailors put in earplugs, they saw the reality and rowed quickly away. Similarly, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa blocks our ears to the siren song of mundane pleasures. Knowing them as ultimate sources of misery and death, one easily gives them up.

Offenses

The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare will gradually but quickly eradicate the three types of *anartha* I've discussed: illusion, weakness of the heart, and material desires. The fourth type of *anartha,* the *aparādha,* however, is a direct affront to the holy name. While constant chanting will destroy *aparādhas,* we also need to assiduously avoid them. If we make no effort to be free of the *anarthas,* and particularly the offenses to chanting, then the holy name won't give us mercy. Ultimately, only through Kṛṣṇa's mercy do we realize that the name is identical with the Lord Himself. In any form, including His holy name, Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself or not, as He desires. Our own efforts to evoke His mercy are necessary, but never sufficient.

The offenses to chanting are to offend other devotees of the Lord, to consider Kṛṣṇa's name to be equal to the name of some ordinary being, even a demigod, to disobey the spiritual master's order, to blaspheme scripture, to interpret the Lord's holy name in a mundane way, to think the glories of the holy name are exaggerated, to intentionally sin with the idea that chanting will erase the sin, to consider chanting the holy name to be material piety, to convey the name's glories to the faithless, to chant without attention, and to chant without faith and while maintaining material attachments.

A person free from these offenses is eligible to relish and rejoice in the pure name of Kṛṣṇa. Of course, even when chanted with offenses the holy name remains pure. One's *anar-*

thas only make it look impure, just as a colored filter makes a white light seem colored. A devotee of Kṛṣṇa in whose heart there remains only a tinge of *anarthas,* like the scent of perfume in an empty bottle, begins to feel the bliss of humility born of material detachment. Steady in his or her effort in serving Kṛṣṇa, the devotee finds chanting and other service to be easy. In a heart free of false ego, one feels compassion without envy and with respect for everyone.

Automatic Results

Up through the stage of freedom from *anarthas,* we have to struggle very hard, with determination, and then automatically everything will come. For example, steadiness in offenseless chanting automatically brings liberation. We lose the load of illusory identification and desires we unconsciously carry, and we feel truly free. Upon attaining this stage the relief is so great that we may think there is no greater gain. This inner detachment, along with steady devotion to Kṛṣṇa, brings freedom from all material miseries. But this is just the beginning of the life of spirit. From the platform of freedom, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa brings one to such pleasure in spiritual life that one is keen for all service to Kṛṣṇa. Gone are all fatigue or boredom in such service, as experienced when the heart is full of *anarthas*.

At this stage of ecstasy, the physical aspects of chanting become automatic and unnoticed as the holy names dance within the mind. Naturally Lord Kṛṣṇa's qualities, form, and divine play blossom in the heart, the name as the catalyst. To chant the names like this is to know love and sweetness beyond anything else, material or spiritual.

In the lower stages one tends to think of mundane things while chanting, without understanding how the mind became distracted. But in the advanced stages of chanting, attachment to Kṛṣṇa awakens, and one's mind spontaneously runs to thoughts of Him.

Through chanting, this attachment deepens to overwhelming emotion, the flower that will produce the fruit of pure love. Such emotion arises in a devotee who is far past the stage of neutrality regarding desires and feelings for anything of the world. Materially, a great person subdues emotions with intelligence. The devotee surpasses the perfection of this art and feels spiritual emotions that are the pure prototypes of all worldly feelings.

As spiritual emotions mature into pure love of God, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa reveals our original transcendent form, name, and relationship to the Lord. Even while the external life and affairs of the body continue, the soul within travels to Kṛṣṇa's kingdom to enjoy a life of which this ordinary existence is merely a twisted shadow. At the body's demise, one no longer returns to this world of birth and death, but attains the Lord's eternal, self-illumined abode.

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Sri Nāmāṣṭaka

(Eight Prayers Glorifying the Holy Name)

by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī
translated from Sanskrit by Kuśakratha Dāsa*

O Hari-nāma! The tips of the toes of Your lotus feet are constantly being worshiped by the glowing radiance emanating from the string of gems known as the *Upaniṣads,* the crown jewels of all the *Vedas.* You are eternally adored by liberated souls, such as Nārada and Śukadeva. O Hari-nāma! I take complete shelter of You.

O Hari-nāma, all glories to You! Sung by all the sages, You are the supreme combination of syllables, and You bring transcendental bliss to all people. Even if a person utters You only once disrespectfully, still You relieve his many extreme sufferings.

O sun of the holy name, even a dim glimmer of Your splendor swallows up the powerful darkness of materialistic life and gives those who are blind to the truth the vision to follow the path of pure devotional service. Who in this world, even if learned and pious, can fully describe Your transcendental glory?

O holy name, the *Vedas* declare that meditation on the impersonal Brahman cannot bring freedom from karmic reactions, that they have to be enjoyed or suffered, but that when You manifest in one's consciousness all karma at once disappears.

O holy name, You have many forms, such as Aghadamana (Crusher of Aghāsura), Yaśodānandana (Darling Child of Yaśodā), Nandasūnu (Son of Nanda), Kamalanayana (Lotus-eyed One), Gopīcandra (Moon of the Gopīs), Vṛndāvanendra (King of Vṛndāvana), Praṇatakaruṇa (He Who Is Merciful to the Surrendered Souls), and Kṛṣṇa. I pray that my love for You in Your many forms may greatly increase.

O holy name, You are manifested in two forms: the Supreme Person You designate, and the sound vibration that designates. We know that the second form is more merciful than the first, because even if a person offends Your first form in many ways, You plunge him into an ocean of transcendental bliss if he serves Your second form with his voice.

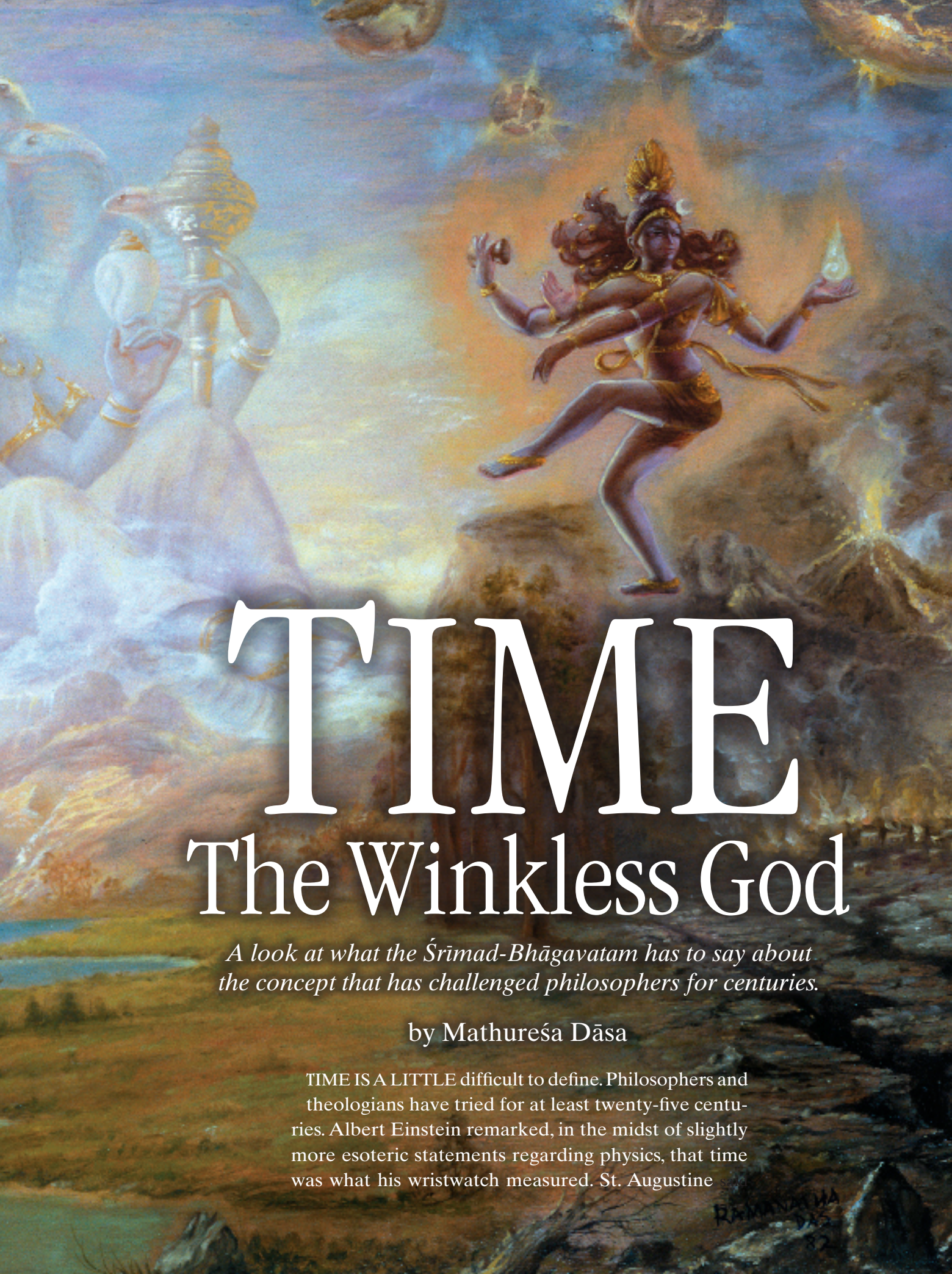
O holy name, You destroy the many sufferings of those who take shelter of You. You are the very form of intense spiritual bliss, a festival of happiness for Gokula, and the perfect and complete form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Again and again I bow to You.

O enlivener of Nārada's *vīṇā,* O flood of the waves of sweet nectar, O holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, please forever manifest on my tongue with all Your nectarean sweetness.

*Text 1 is Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation

Though Brahmā and Śiva have roles to play in the creation, their power comes from Lord Viṣṇu.

Painting by Rāmadāsa Abhirāma Dāsa



TIME
The Winkless God

A look at what the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam has to say about the concept that has challenged philosophers for centuries.

by Mathureśa Dāsa

TIME IS A LITTLE difficult to define. Philosophers and theologians have tried for at least twenty-five centuries. Albert Einstein remarked, in the midst of slightly more esoteric statements regarding physics, that time was what his wristwatch measured. St. Augustine

Time is an original cause as an instrument of Viṣṇu, inert nature the original ingredient.

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that he knew what time was as long as no one asked him to explain it. And sounding a note of frustration in her book *What, Then, Is Time* (the title too is from St. Augustine), Eva Brann laments, "Why don't I know what that is which I tell, save, spend, mark, waste, and even kill every day of my life with perfect aplomb?"

If we don't know what time is, perhaps we can at least place it, or say *where* it is, and is not. In *A Brief History of Time* scientist Stephen Hawking proposes that " the concept of time has no meaning before the beginning of the universe," thus placing time, say, alongside the universe, or inextricably involved with it. Hawking quotes (yet again) St. Augustine as saying that time is a property of the universe created by God, a property that did not exist before the creation.

The Vedic literature, which covers a wide range of topics, also deals with time. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* specifically, weighs in on the subject of the place and function of time in the creation of the universe. Portions of the *Bhāgavatam* confirm and contradict the assertions of Hawking, Einstein, Augustine, and others, while providing unique perspectives.

The *Bhāgavatam* teaches that Lord Kṛṣṇa in His form as Viṣṇu is responsible for creation. Though Brahmā and Śiva also have roles to play, their power comes from Lord Viṣṇu. He exists alone before the creation, when nature is a subtle attribute of His person and time is in a dormant state as one of His powers. From his own attributes and powers, Lord Viṣṇu creates the universe, which is thus identical to Him, while remaining unchanged and aloof Himself. He maintains the creation effortlessly for an unimaginable length of time, then destroys it and absorbs it back into Himself, then creates again.

This happens over and over, and after each destruction Viṣṇu is alone. Or nearly so. Viṣṇu has an eternal abode beyond the creation and destruction of matter where His perfect devotees live with Him. Viṣṇu gives these devotees divine, affliction-free bodies like His own, bedecked with crowns and garlands. They reside with Him forever, free from rebirth in a temporary universe. Lord Viṣṇu Himself sometimes visits His creation, however, and some of His descents as avatars are described in the *Bhāgavatam.* These avatars come to save the world, delivering the good and destroying the wicked while establishing dharma. Lord Viṣṇu descends this way of His own free will, unlike the array of subordinate individual souls, all under the sway of their karma, who enter the universe in the beginning of creation.

This cycle of creations is in line with the recurring theme of circular time described in the Vedic literature. The ages of Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali rotate like seasons. The individual living beings rotate through cycles of birth and death in different bodies. Creation and destruction of the universe also occur repeatedly.

Time as an Instrumental Cause

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* recounts that as the creation of the universe gets underway, nature manifests from Viṣṇu in an inert and formless state. With no elements yet, no air, water, and so on, nothing is happening. Viṣṇu uses His time power to cause a "commotion" in nature and inseminates her with a multiplicity of individual living beings, or souls, as yet without bodies. This sets the creation on its way. The metaphor of a pregnancy is dramatic, with living beings now in the womb of nature, and with time, as an "impelling force," clearly playing a central, if not precisely specified, role in the mix. Time is an original cause as an instrument of Viṣṇu, inert nature the original ingredient.

We living souls too are part of the time-activated mix. In his commentary on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Vijayadvaja identifies time with "the fate of the individual souls necessary for the fruition of their karmas." Expressing a similar notion, the *Bhāgavatam* speaks of "time which awakens the fate of beings." By their karma, or past activities, the living beings have a destiny to fulfill, with time, under the direction of Viṣṇu, awakening and impelling them to it. With this impelled life now in the womb, things begin to happen, and time remains to relentlessly direct each step of the creative process. Time is, in the words of one *Bhāgavatam* commentator, "winkless."

Portraying time as a power of God may not, as far as definitions go, satisfy a purely scientific mind. But so far, the *Bhāgavatam* perspective does provide time, in response to the "where" question, with a theoretical location or origin beyond the creation, and in response to the "what" question, with a familiar status as one of God's instruments. Neither of these responses wholly contradicts the statements of Augustine and Hawking that time has no existence or relevance before the creation. Since time in the *Bhāgavatam* is dormant before the universe begins, and awakens more or less simultaneously with the first phase of nature, in one sense it is nonexistent and irrelevant prior to that. On the other hand, *Bhāgavatam* time is not exactly one of the created elements, which have not appeared yet in nature's womb. It is a property, as Augustine calls it, that precedes other properties.

A Vaiṣṇava wall calendar, filled moment by moment with favorable and unfavorable times for all kinds of religious as well as ordinary activities, demonstrates that placing time

Time in the Spiritual World

We know from the Vedic literature that activities take place in the spiritual world, implying some kind of passage of time. But the references below show that spiritual time is different from what we know as time in the material world.

In the spiritual world there is undoubtedly time, but it has no control over activities. Time is unlimited, and the spiritual world is also unlimited, since everything there exists on the absolute plane.
—Śrīla Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.11.38 Purport

Time in the spiritual world has a singular aspect; it is always in the present, whereas past and future are absent. The *jīva* and the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, exist in that spiritual time.
—Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Jaiva Dharma

[Time in the spiritual world] is ever present and without past or future and hence is not subject to the quality of passing away even for the space of half a moment.
—*Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.56

In the spiritual sky of the *brahmajyoti* there is no change of various *kalpas* or millenniums, and there are no creative activities in the Vaikuṇṭha worlds. The influence of time is conspicuous by its absence.
—Śrīla Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.9.3 Purport

In that personal abode of the Lord, the material modes of ignorance and passion do not prevail, nor is there any of their influence in goodness. There is no predominance of the influence of time . . . Purport by Śrīla Prabhupāda: . . . everything in the transcendental world is everlasting, full of knowledge and bliss without deterioration. Since there is no deterioration, there is no past, present and future in the estimation of time. It is clearly stated in this verse that the influence of time is conspicuous by its absence. The whole material existence is manifested by actions and reactions of elements which make the influence of time prominent in the matter of past, present and future. There are no such actions and reactions of cause and effects there, so the cycle of birth, growth, existence, transformations, deterioration and annihilation—the six material changes—are not existent there.
—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.10, with Purport by Śrīla Prabhupāda

beyond creation would not tell the whole story. Time is present in the cycle of ages, as well as in daily affairs. Time's impelling nature may have its source beyond the universe, but manages to enter the days as well, somehow reconciling its precedence and its "pursuit" of the creation.

On the everyday level, the words "impelling" and "commotional" that the *Bhāgavatam* uses for time in its primordial feature could just as well apply to the unsettling effects a person feels glancing at a calendar or clock. The same kind of impelling force is at work in the daily mix. When Eva Brann asks, "Why don't I know what time is?" it is the contrast between this extremely familiar, ever-present thing that people daily save, waste, kill, mark, and spend, and the mysterious thing we can hardly know, that provokes her. The *Bhāgavatam* make practical use of these everyday dynamics and images to construct a transcendent view of time. As time pursues the creation, the *Bhāgavatam,* through an elaborate system called Sāṅkhya, draws further on the everyday.

Pursuing the Creation: Sāṅkhya Background

Nature, pregnant with living beings, and in flux under the force of time, next begins to differentiate into component elements. The *Bhāgavatam* puts its description of this process under the heading of Sāṅkhya cosmology. *Sāṅkhya* carries the meaning of "number," and the Sāṅkhya system's efforts to enumerate and categorize the elements of nature bear a loose resemblance to modern scientific efforts to assemble the periodic table. As the periodic table arranges the elements by their atomic numbers, which in turn correspond to their structures and properties, Sāṅkhya describes the properties of its twenty-four elements, or categories of elements, and their relationship to each other. In *A Survey of Hinduism,* Klaus Klostermaier says of Sāṅkhya, "The enumeration of the twenty-four basic elements is intended to provide a physically correct description of the universe and prepare the ground for the way back to its source." Reflecting a related motivation in modern science, Hawking writes, "Our goal is nothing less than a complete description of the universe we live in."

The Second and Third Cantos of the *Bhāgavatam* present several descriptions of the Sāṅkhya system, each differing slightly. The count of elements is sometimes twenty-four, sometimes twenty-five or twenty-seven, depending on how some elements are subdivided. My discussion here draws a general outline of the Sāṅkhya system from various descriptions, including one from the Third Canto, Chapter 26, which lists time as an element. To preview, and to make a long story short, the elements appear in a particular sequence, evolving from one to the next, with one basic explanation for this evolution: the force of time

(*please turn to page 56*)

Painting by Puṣkara Dāsa

Godly Qualities for God Realization (PART 2)

Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals what qualities please Him and make us fit for His company.

by Amala Bhakta Dāsa

In both the Bhagavad-gītā *and the* Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam *Lord Kṛṣṇa lists qualities that please Him, decorate His devotees, and are essential for those who wish to win His favor and make progress in spiritual life. In* Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta *(*Madhya-līlā *22.75), Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, "A Vaiṣṇava is one who has developed all good transcendental qualities. All the good qualities of Kṛṣṇa gradually develop in Kṛṣṇa's devotee." He then lists twenty-six qualities, often cited by Śrīla Prabhupāda.*

In this three-part series, the author discusses twenty-eight godly qualities listed by Lord Kṛṣṇa when instructing His devotee Uddhava in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam *(11.11.29–32).*

A Controller of the Senses

IN THE *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.58) Lord Kṛṣṇa says that when we can withdraw our senses from sensory objects, as a turtle can draw its limbs into its body, we are firmly fixed in perfect consciousness. This means that if we have made a plan to do something but are suddenly diverted to enjoy some sensory object, we can withdraw our senses from it and keep our mind fixed on accomplishing our plan. This quality is essential for attaining any goal in life, spiritual or material.

If we are easily distracted and sidetracked from our original plan,

Lord Kṛṣṇa displays the quality of sense control when, even though He enjoys pastimes with His beautiful queens in Dwarka, His senses are always under complete control.

We can gain full control over our senses by dovetailing them in God's devotional service and trying our utmost to please Him.

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however, it is very unlikely that we will be able to accomplish it. This will happen quite frequently when we have a strong desire to enjoy sensual pleasure, which generally occurs when we feel very little inner or spiritual pleasure, for it is our nature to want to enjoy some kind of pleasure.

We can gain full control over our senses by dovetailing them in God's devotional service and trying our utmost to please Him. This will give us the inner pleasure we need to feel genuinely happy, and such happiness will enable us to ignore or disregard the many sensory diversions that might otherwise tempt us. This is true sense control, which is far superior to any kind of artificial sensory suppression.

Lord Kṛṣṇa showed this control in connection with His many beautiful wives. They were so attractive that by their smiling and shyness they captivated the minds of even the demigods. In spite of their alluring feminine behavior, however, they could not agitate or influence Kṛṣṇa's mind even a fraction, so perfectly controlled was He. For this reason He is often referred to as Hṛṣīkeśa, the master of the senses.

Gentle

When we realize that everyone is a soul with whom we are closely related under the fatherhood of God, we automatically act gently. Polite, courteous, considerate, and kind, we respect others' rights and interests and carefully avoid encroaching on them. Having no desire to control or dominate anyone, we act harmoniously and peacefully.

Lord Kṛṣṇa showed His gentleness one day when He arrived at the arena where a great sacrifice was to be held by His older cousin King Yudhiṣṭhira. The king knew that Kṛṣṇa was God, so he tried to alight from his chariot to properly receive Him. But before he could do so, the Lord jumped from His own chariot and bowed down at the king's feet. Although Kṛṣṇa is the Lord, He never forgets to observe social etiquette in His dealings. In other words, He is not falsely proud of His position.

If we remain in the false-ego mentality, however, we generally want to conquer or subjugate others. And should anyone try to hinder, oppose, or destroy our plans, we may treat them roughly, perhaps even savagely, just to insure our success. Such a mentality is the very opposite of gentleness and can become an obstacle in our pursuit of self-realization. Therefore, we should try to remember often that we are an eternal soul and not our temporary body.

Well-behaved

When our heart is pure, our thoughts, words, and deeds are also pure. In fact, we become disinclined to touch anything impure or engage in any activity that is improper. Consequently, we behave properly, acting in conformity with society's required decorum and etiquette. Thus we do not cause anyone unnecessary disturbances or difficulties, and people naturally feel confident about us and glad to associate with us.

Free of Possessiveness

Realizing that God is the supreme proprietor, we understand that we cannot really own anything. Although we may be the legal owner of our possessions, we are, at best, the Lord's caretaker of them. Knowing this, we should not lament or complain when the Lord decides to withdraw them from us, or us from them. He always reserves the right to do whatever He wishes with His property.

Generally, we become possessive about our properties because we believe they are indispensable to our happiness. This, of course, is an illusion. The Supersoul alone is indispensable to our happiness—both material and spiritual. It is He who oversees our karmic reactions and permits us to have happiness or distress. Once we begin to experience spiritual happiness—in association with God—we will be able to renounce our possessiveness towards material pleasures. Having found something far superior, we can easily give up the inferior.

Free of Material Activities

This does not mean that we cannot pursue our legal occupation, which may appear to be a material rather than a spiritual activity. Just because it is not directly concerned with the glorification or worship of God does not make it material. If we consider the company or institution for which we work as belonging to God, and if we devotedly perform our service for Him and lovingly offer its results to Him, this is completely spiritual.

If we perform our duties for our own egotistical satisfaction, however, totally forgetful of the Lord, that is material activity. By persisting in this, we become further entangled in these activities and subject to more suffering in this life, as well as in future lives. Therefore, we should try to spiritualize all our activities.

Moderate in Eating

We should eat only as much as necessary to keep our body healthy, for if we overeat regularly we will become ill. Thus we should avoid gorging ourselves with stimulating foods. Nor should we become so austere

that we become weak, fatigued, and careless. Our chief reason for eating should be to stay healthy and fit to render service to God.

Moreover, we should consume only food suitable to offer the Lord and which has been offered to Him. And most important, we should be grateful and satisfied with whatever food God graces us with each day.

Peaceful

When we become genuinely peaceful, we are never disturbed or agitated by unfavorable circumstances. Nor are we indifferent to them. Rather, we are alert and responsive to adversities, and we do the best we can to overcome them. This type of peacefulness is derived from regular daily contact with the Lord Himself. Chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* as frequently as possible will help us to achieve this tranquil state. And we can increase our peacefulness even more if we follow the instructions Lord Kṛṣṇa gives us in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.57–58):

> In all activities just depend on Me and work always under my protection. In such devotional service be fully conscious of Me. If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditioned life by My grace. If, however, you do not work in such consciousness but act through false ego, not hearing Me, you will be lost.

Therefore, we should always try to be conscious of God, depending on Him for protection and guidance. Thus, we will always feel peaceful.

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Steady

We should be steady in our determination to achieve the highest spiritual realization. If we are not strong, many obstacles can divert us from our spiritual goal. Some of these are pleasure, pain, victory, defeat, loss, gain, happiness, and distress. If we become overly preoccupied with any or all of these, we will find that they will consume much of our time and energy, leaving us scarcely enough for spiritual practices and studies. This could gradually cause us to abandon our spiritual quest.

For this reason, we should continually remind ourselves how important it is for us to attain our spiritual goal. By doing this, along with regular chanting of God's holy names, we fortify our determination to remain fixed on the spiritual path. If our determination is very strong, then even if we have an unexpected setback, we will, as soon as possible, fully resume our devotional activities. In fact, we will desire this even if we have suspended some of them.

When we develop steadiness in our spiritual practices and studies, we acquire power from this. This power is useful for warding off

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obstacles that might normally embroil us in material difficulties. It is also helpful for enabling us to increase our devotional service to God. Therefore we should, by all means, become firmly determined to remain steady in our spiritual pursuit.

Dependent on God for Shelter

Life today is especially fearsome. Death could come at any second, as it is coming to someone this very moment. There are many ways our body can die—disease, drowning, fire, injury, murder, and so on—even if we don't want it to. Although we should not be afraid of death, we should be afraid of dying without thinking of God. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, O son of Kuntī, that state he will attain without fail." This means that if we leave our body desiring the company of our family, home, money, possessions, business, or pet, it is very likely we will be re-born on earth to satisfy this wish.

And that means another lifetime of suffering.

If we depart from the world thinking of the Lord or His pure devotee, however, we will ascend to the spiritual world to engage in His eternal service. Therefore, it is important for us to try to remember God as often as possible—until it becomes a firm habit and we feel uncomfortable *not* recalling Him. Then, after some time, we will find ourselves remembering Him while we are walking, driving, flying, working—yes, even dreaming. Thus, let us always take shelter of our only real protector.

Thoughtful

We should not act impulsively or whimsically to satisfy some strange fancy or wild yen. Rather, we should be thoughtful about everything we do. We need to always ask ourselves whether what we want to do will help or hinder us in our spiritual growth. And our answer should be based on the rules and regulations in the holy scriptures. If the action will help us, then we should do it, but if it will divert us, we should avoid it.

We may sometimes yield to some whim under the belief that we will do it only one time. That may be our original intention, but our action may very well develop into a bad uncontrollable habit. And this habit may lead us deep into worldly dealings, ties, and miseries. Therefore, understanding that we could become a victim, it would be better to resist the original temptation.

To do this, we should clearly remember that since our mind belongs to God, we should use it *exclusively* for trying to please Him instead of ourselves. By doing this, He will, in reciprocation, please us beyond what we could ever imagine. So let us be thoughtful about all the activities we wish to perform.

Cautious and Without Illusion

We must realize how greatly powerful the material energy, or *māyā,* is. Her chief business is to deceive us into believing we can be truly happy in the material world. Therefore, she offers us various allurements designed to help us feel like we're in control. And even if we significantly suffer by yielding to them, she provides us with rationalizations to give in to them again.

For example, let us say that in the past each time we ate a particular tasty food we suffered from painful indigestion. And now, as we again see the food in a store display case, we strongly desire to eat it. Although we remember our past distress, *māyā* makes us believe that perhaps now our digestive system can adequately process that food. But several minutes after we pleasurably indulge, we again feel excruciating pains in our stomach.

Therefore, we must be very cautious in our thinking and ask ourselves whether *māyā* or God is in control of our thought processes. This requires that we understand that whatever we think is good or beneficial for us is not necessarily so, as we may like to believe. Therefore, we should learn to be suspicious of our own thoughts and carefully consider whether acting on them will be in our best interest.

Amala Bhakta Dāsa is well known for his audio recordings of Kṛṣṇa conscious books (available from the Krishna.com Store). He is also the author of four books, the most recent of which is The Supreme Mystic, *a biographical novel about the early years of Lord Kṛṣṇa.*

REMEMBER GOD?

Coming Back to My Eternal Friend

After years searching and struggling, she finally found the right place to develop the natural connection she felt with God.

by Bhakti-latā Devī Dāsī

IT WAS THE third day in the hospital. The IV was still in my right arm. As I gazed through the window, a few leaves, colored yellow and red by the season, fell from a nearby tree. It was a beautiful fall day in Montreal, I was twenty, and I was trapped in here. How did it come to this?

I was raised in a middle-class, French Canadian, Catholic family. I went to church ever since I can remember. I recall being at church at the age of four, feeling safe, awed, and in some way, more at home than in my own house.

The presence of God was very natural to me. I used to have conversations with Him before falling asleep, talking to Him like a friend. I would confide, discuss my day, ask questions, and reveal my hopes and fears.

The first time I examined one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books I was twelve years old. The book was titled *Easy Journey to Other Planets.* Somehow, it found its way to my brother's bookcase, and I browsed through it many times. Although I couldn't figure out what it was all about, I loved gazing at the cover and inside pictures.

In that same period, I went on a field trip with my class to a convent for cloistered nuns. As I entered I was overwhelmed with a feeling of belonging. I loved the seclusion and the prolonged prayer times. I loved the idea of a life dedicated to prayer and contemplation. I would have moved right in, but understandably, my mother was not so inclined to let me make such a life-long commitment at the ripe age of twelve. As an alternative, for the next

Yamarāja Dāsa

two years I corresponded with a priest, discussing religious matters.

I began to go to church more often, not only for the usual Sunday Mass with my family, but also by myself, at odd times during the week. I would even sometimes leave school during lunch break to seek the oasis of a nearby church. Determined to live a sin-free life, I visited the confessional often, reciting my list of innocent, harmless "crimes" over and over again.

At fourteen, at a time when most girls my age listened to pop music and worshiped the rock stars of the day, I would spend hours in my room listening to the soundtrack of *Jesus Christ Superstar,* a popular movie at the time. Although I had never seen the movie, I knew all the lyrics by heart and sang them with great feeling, meditating intently on Jesus's life and teachings. But I didn't have any friends to share my passion. Religion is not a popular hobby.

One day, when shopping for ballet shoes downtown with my sister, I had my first sight of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees. They were dancing a few blocks away and I could hear a faint *ching-ching-ching*. I had no idea who these people were or what they were doing, but something stirred inside me. I felt intrigued and attracted, but I was far too introverted to go any closer.

Fitting In

Years passed, and my lack of association with spiritually-minded people made me vulnerable to peer pressure, with its unrelenting demands for conformity. Slowly, I started losing touch with my spiritual aspirations and became consumed by my efforts to fit in, to be "cool." Against my better judgment I toyed with drugs, sex, and alcohol. My grades began to suffer, although I managed to keep them afloat thanks to my natural academic nature.

Little by little I started living only for the next thrill, the next smoke, the next party. I developed a whole persona to fit what I thought were people's expectations of me. I forgot myself and, soon enough forgot God as well. My life became bleak, soulless, and unsubstantial.

When I was sixteen and in the midst of senseless pursuits, Kṛṣṇa reached to me again, this time in the form of a tall *brahmacārī* (celibate student) stationed at a subway exit, holding a large tray and smiling kindly. I reached out to take the sweet he was offering me. Walking quickly away, I took a bite. Wow! The taste exploded in my mouth. I had never tasted anything like that in my life! I was at a total loss to comprehend what I was experiencing, but I knew that something extraordinary was happening. Now, knowing the inconceivable purifying power of *prasādam,* I understand I was having a taste of the Lord Himself.

Had I not been so shy I would have turned back and asked the devotee to explain what had just happened to me. Unfortunately, I continued on my way, entangling myself deeper into the complex web of *māyā,* the illusory energy of the material world.

At age nineteen I met the man I would spend my life with. As I saw him the first time, I heard a voice say, "To be in love." I was taken aback, not only because I was not given to hearing voices, but also because that day I had decided I would be better off being single. We talked and talked; I felt I had known him forever. Soon after we met, Marc convinced me to stop using drugs. He was a seeker of truth.

At this point I became somewhat attracted by spiritual matters once again. Deplorably, for lack of guidance and discrimination, I read the book of a famous Indian guru who advocated that we could have complete control over our life. He described how we could send our "gray particles" into the future to shape our upcoming reality. It sounded like a great philosophy to me. As Marc and I wanted to go plant trees in western Canada, I sent my gray particles ahead of us. We hitchhiked across Canada for weeks, bent on our new adventure. We traveled all day and at night pitched our tent among the trees alongside the highway.

In Calgary we applied for a tree-

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The Hare Kṛṣṇas seemed oblivious to the turmoil of the world around them, as if gliding above it, whereas I felt tossed by its every single wave.

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planter job. We were told that since hundreds of young people applied every year, the possibility of employment was slim. Utterly confident in the power of my gray particles, however, I was completely undaunted. We went on to camp in Banff, British Columbia, for a couple of weeks, and then hit the road once more. The first man who gave us a ride happened to be a tree-planting contractor. He hired us on the spot. I was neither surprised nor even remotely grateful; my grey particles had done all the work, hadn't they?

Planting trees was an awesome experience. I was working hard for ten hours a day, alone, in the most wild, remote places. One area we worked in was so isolated that it could only be reached by helicopter. One time I even came across the skeleton of a moose, and another day I found myself face to face with a bear.

Calling Out To God in The wilderness

A few weeks of this grueling physical labor brought about unexpected therapeutic results. One afternoon, I became suddenly aware that the chatter of my mind had completely stopped; a sense of peace came over me like I hadn't known before. I left my tools on the ground and instinctively made my way deeper into the woods. I found a small, crystal-clear brook and sat beside it. For the first time in years I remembered God. I felt like a whole part of me had been locked in the dark and some light was at last filtering through.

A few days later, as I was working under a heavy rain, trudging in deep mud, the veil of illusion that had covered me was partially removed and I saw the past few years of my existence for what they really were, with all of their lies and futility. It was as if my life was passing in front of my mind's eye for review, and I found it to be very wretched indeed.

My heart was filled with sorrow. At that moment I felt that not only my body, but my spirit as well, was covered with mud. The setting couldn't have been orchestrated more perfectly. Overwhelmed, I prayed for forgiveness. I didn't know how I would salvage my life or if it was at all possible. In that solitary place, away from an artificial civilization, I silently prayed for help.

Our tree-planting experience over, we returned to Montreal. Although I was unaware of it, our apartment was close by the Hare Kṛṣṇa temple. One morning, while taking a walk, I saw a devotee on the other side of the street. His robes were slightly floating around him in the breeze, and he seemed to be in and from another world. I would love to be like these people, I thought, not really understanding what I meant by that. I just knew that somehow "these people" seemed oblivious to the turmoil of the world around them, as if gliding above it, whereas I felt tossed by its every single wave. Once again, I passed up the opportunity to inquire further and kept on walking.

Life went on. I went through the motions, without any real interest in anything or any sense of direction. One day I realized I was pregnant. I was overjoyed by the prospect of having a baby with the man I loved. I remember waiting at the bus stop, talking to my baby and patting my still flat belly.

To my great distress, Marc didn't share my delight in having a child. He was twenty-one, without a career or even a job, and definitely not ready to be a father. I was devastated. Fearing that if I kept our baby he might leave me, and lacking the communication skills to discuss the matter properly, I did the unthinkable; against my deepest desire and convictions, I had the baby aborted.

I came back from the clinic utterly empty and dispirited. Although I was told to take complete rest, I furiously and frantically tore up the old linoleum in my bedroom, thus expressing my inner torment the best way I could. As a result of this strenuous work, I developed a serious internal infection and had to be hospitalized, IV and all.

That's when I got it.

I hadn't sent my gray particles to create this tragedy, had I? So if I hadn't created this situation, who or what had? That meant only one thing: I was definitely not in control of my life. This realization hit me hard. If I was not in control, anything could happen at any time. I felt humbled, lost, and scared.

This was the lowest point of my life. My heart was broken from the loss of my first child, and I became so depressed that I would sit in the corner of my room, smoking cigar after cigar and gulping down chocolate bars. Yet from the depths of my grief the memory of Jesus rose up as if from the distant past, bringing me solace and hope. I began imagining him knocking on my door. I visualized myself stepping outside, leaving everything behind, and following him without even looking back. My old hankering for a religious life was reawakened.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa explains that four kinds of people come to Him: those in distress, those in need of money, the inquisitive, and those

searching for knowledge of the Absolute. In my case, it was distress that fueled my desire to turn to God once again.

Waiting for Something to Happen

Two months passed. I somewhat got over my depression, but felt disillusioned by the whole show of this world. Nothing seemed attractive. I didn't care much for anything anymore. I started reading some semi-spiritual books that served to tantalize me but were not nearly potent enough to satisfy my inner hunger for the Absolute Truth. I felt myself waiting for something to happen.

One fine afternoon Marc stumbled upon an old friend of his he had been searching for ever since we had met. As it turned out, this friend had become a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee the year before. Marc stayed at the temple for two days and came back to tell me all about it. After hearing his account, I knew this was the chance to change my life I had yearned for, a chance I was determined not to miss. There was no time to lose. Even before visiting the temple I packed my bags. We moved in right away.

Witnessing my first evening *ārati* (ceremony to worship the Lord) was a very mystical experience for me. Although there were many deities in the temple, I could only see the deity of Kṛṣṇa, no one and nothing else. My eyes were transfixed on His face, and I felt Him take over my heart, my life, and seep deeply into my soul. The experience seemed to last an eternity. I was finally home.

Twenty-two Years Later

That was in 1984. Now, twenty-two years later, Kṛṣṇa's fascinating nature still holds me in its grip. I have learned since that Kṛṣṇa's deity in Montreal is called Manohara, or one who steals one's mind. This is what I experienced that first night; Kṛṣṇa stole my heart and mind.

Marc (now Mukunda Dāsa) and I got officially married in 1985, and we now have two wonderful daughters. We feel blessed in every way.

Do I regret my sudden decision to join Śrīla Prabhupāda's Hare Kṛṣṇa movement? No. In reality, it was not as sudden as it seems; my cherished desire to give my life over to God had simply been forgotten. Once reminded of it, I couldn't see any reason to deny my path any longer. Also, by then I knew that God's presence was not limited to a particular religion. It didn't matter to me how God was calling me, only that He was calling me.

Over the years, I have served the Lord's deity form, dressing Him, cooking for Him, making garlands and clothes for Him. I have also chanted His name in the streets, my baby daughter on my back, while distributing cookies I baked so others could have *their* first taste of *prasādam.* I have sent Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to all the prisons of Canada that were willing to accept them, and corresponded with many inmates, sending them more books and also prayer beads, encouraging them to take up the chanting of the holy name. I have organized Kṛṣṇa conscious plays and taken part in a devotee home-school cooperative.

As part of my current service, I teach a powerful breathing technique that benefits body, mind, and spirit.

Reflecting on my life, I see how Kṛṣṇa has never deserted me, how He has determinedly followed me through the years, dropping hints of His presence, patiently waiting for me to turn to Him once more, like the most loving friend. I am grateful.

Bhakti-latā Devī Dāsī lives in Alachua, Florida.

TIME, THE WINKLESS GOD

(*continued from page 47*)

and the force of destiny, or fate. Again time and destiny in the *Bhāgavatam,* if not identical, are closely related.

Pursuing the Creation: Theory of Evolution

Beyond the fundamental similarities already noted, the Sāṅkhya list of elements differs markedly from anything Einstein or Hawking would recognize. There are five "gross" elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. This is a lot like Aristotle's list (earth, water, fire, air), and is as close as Sāṅkhya gets to elements or categories resembling those in the periodic table. There are then five sense objects: sound, touch, form, taste, and odor. Then five sense organs: ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose. Then five working senses: arms, legs, speech organs, genitals, and anus. And three subtle elements: mind, intelligence, and ego. That makes four sets of five and one set of three. Add time for a grand total of twenty-four elements in the entire universe.

Time both moves the creation from step to step and is the context for the sequence of these steps. Of the twenty-four elements above, the *Bhāgavatam* lists ego as the first to appear in the womb of nature. From ego, which "undergoes modifications" by the force of time, both mind and intelligence are produced. Time also modifies ego to produce sound, which appears along with space and the ear. Space evolves through time to produce another group of three: touch, air, and the skin. Air produces form, fire, and the eye. Fire evolves to taste, water, and the tongue. Water transforms to smell, earth, and the nose. Everything appears in automatic sequence by the power of time, under distant supervision by Viṣṇu. At this point in creation there appears to be only an inventory of elements with nothing fully assembled from them. The *Bhāgavatam* does go on to describe assembly of species of life and planetary systems, all still under the control of time. The chosen topic here, though, is time's place and the properties that make it elusive.

Properties of The Propertyless

From this summary version of elemental evolution, it is notable that each stage of three elements includes a corresponding sense. Sound and space appear with the ear, touch and air with the skin, form and fire (or light) with the eye. According to

Sāṅkhya analysis, as light illuminates form and is perceived by, and inseparable from, the eye, so space is connected to sound and the ear. Space "illuminates" the sound perceived by the ear. It carries sound the way light carries form. Similarly, water carries taste for the tongue, earth originates smell for the nose. Earth, in fact, as the last gross element to evolve, interacts with all five senses. You can smell it, taste it, see it, touch it, and—as it can produce sounds—hear it. Water, the element preceding earth, is odorless in its pure form, and so perceived by only four senses. And so on down to space in the first group of three along with sound, which is perceived by only one sense, the ear. All this is a very analytical, roundabout way of saying that time, though an element, has no corresponding sense or medium, nothing to directly illuminate or perceive it. This is another unique feature of time, one that hints at Eva Brann's point as to why time is so hard know. Time is present with all the other elements, an essential part of the mix, but lacks a sensory access or affiliation.

A further unique aspect of the time of Sāṅkhya, or perhaps a feature of its second, sense-less aspect, is that it has no special property. The *Bhāgavatam* lists the other twenty-three elements along with their properties, many of which are strikingly obvious. Among water's properties, for example, are to moisten, soften, remove heat and exhaustion, and slake thirst. The properties of touch are softness and hardness, cold and heat. Sound conveys meaning. And so on with all the elements. Even the mind (thinking, meditating, desiring), the intelligence (doubt, misapprehension, coming to conclusions), and the ego (pride, feeling of dominion) have their properties. Time does not have characteristics the way earth and the other elements do and is not interdependent as the other elements are. Many commentators hold forth on this point of properties, or propertylessness. Gosvāmī Giridhāra-lāla writes that time "is not characterized by any peculiarity, and hence it is beginningless and endless." How being without peculiarity leads to endlessness is not explained, but another commentator echoes the same idea, saying that time "is not dependent on another cause; he exists of his own accord. Hence, he is endless." The *Bhāgavatam* itself says that time "is endless but puts an end to all. Time is beginningless but marks the beginning of all. He is immutable." Beginninglessness and endlessness, as well as the ability to impose beginnings and ends on everything else, are features of time in the *Bhāgavatam* that are evidently not considered to be properties comparable to the elemental properties.

TIME'S EFFECTS: LIGHT-YEARS AND TIMEPIECES

In its *Bhāgavatam* version, time, being without properties, is perceived only by its effects. From the primordial commotion in nature to the appearance and evolution of the elements, time imposes beginnings and ends. Apart from the *Bhāgavatam,* Brann notes that "When time is spoken of . . . in the world of nature . . . it is usually a word for something else —for motions of various kinds and for their measurements. . . . When time is named in natural science . . . what is meant is a standard motion or a probabilistic tendency." The *Bhāgavatam* time sets the world in motion and keeps it in motion while remaining invisible. Brann's comments on time and motion could be taken as another way of saying that time is not only visible by its effects but measured by those effects as well. Her "standard motions" would then, in Sāṅkhya language, be motions of the twenty-three elements, caused by time. And to measure these motions, other elements or objects have to be used. Einstein's wristwatch, like

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Time, which is beyond perception and empirical observation, is a power of Kṛṣṇa, one of the features that makes God worshipable.

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most standard clocks, was a device calibrated to complete twenty-four cycles within one cycle of the sun. Less common timepieces, like carbon 14, also compare movements in one element with movements of the sun. Practically any element could serve as a clock if its patterns of motion or change are known. Einstein himself was partial to light-years. Old hourglasses used sand. Grand Canyon dating uses the erosive movement of water through stone. If time pursues the creation as the cause of motion or change, then in each of these cases it appears, using a *Bhāgavatam* perspective, that time's effect on one object is being compared to time's effect on another, and the comparison is itself taken to be time or a measurement of time. The *Bhāgavatam* proposes that the transformation, change, or movement of an object or element is the mark of time, not time itself.

The *Bhāgavatam* is aware of this object-to-object conception of time and offers a range of measurement instruments, from the movement of atoms to the movement of the sun (which appears to be as central to *Bhāgavatam* calculations as it is to ours). Time calculations range from millionths of a second up to the length of the creation, which is trillions of years.

SPORTS SECTION

In terms of definitions, time is elusive. Some of the *Bhāgavatam* verses *sound* like definitions. For example, time is "God's power which itself remains unmanifest, but occupies and encompasses [nature] and is competent to manage the creation, etc., of the universe." Or, time is "the propelling force that awakens the fate of beings." On closer inspection, though, what sound like definitions are not really definitive—not final, exhaustive, or quintessential. Instead of definitions, they are more like placements, or attributions for the cause of something else. "Time 'occupies' nature" is a general placement or location. "Time 'awakens' fate" is a causal attribution. Other would-be definitions seem to define roles without fully identifying the role-player. Time as "the power of motivation," for example. Or time as "the instrumental cause" or as "a weapon in God's hands." These are all about what time allegedly *does*. To some extent the *Bhāgavatam* can respond to Hawking's statements about time's relation to the universe, or to Einstein's remark about his watch, but Brann's simple question about what time *is* remains open.

To devotees of Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu a standard definition may not matter. Time, which is beyond perception and empirical observation, is a power of Kṛṣṇa, one of the features that makes God worshipable. Using time, Kṛṣṇa as Viṣṇu creates without strain. Several places in the *Bhāgavatam* describe Viṣṇu's "sportive" (*līlāya*) approach to the creation of the universe. One verse says that Viṣṇu "sportively procreated Himself in the form of the universe by using Time" as His instrument. Others state that "the sportive actions of the Lord . . . comprise within them the preservation, origination, and destruction of the universe" and that by devoted contemplation of His "sportive work" with time, human beings become disgusted with sense pleasures.

Though the *Bhāgavatam,* as well as its commentators, do appear to devote considerable attention to the scientific (in the Sāṅkhya sense) and philosophical aspects of time, time is also portrayed as a divine recreational tool with sportive functions beyond its mysterious and awe-inspiring, thunderboltlike facets. On one hand time "creates terror in beings and reduces their life," "cuts asunder the hope of life in this world," and disperses people as the wind disperses clouds. On the other hand time "has no power over the Almighty God," whose sportive proclivities lead to the repeated creation of the universe.

The contrast between sport and terror is a little alarming, but may bear some similarities to the discussion, outside the Vedic tradition, regarding how God can be good if there is suffering in the creation. As a Christian may assert in the face of suffering that God is all good, so the Vaiṣṇava concept of a playful Viṣṇu may hint at the same idea of a benign God. For Vaiṣṇavas, time in creation gives living beings the chance to pursue their goals both in life after life and in creation after creation. While there is fear and terror involved in this process, mention of eternal suffering or condemnation is absent. Everyone gets a sporting chance at improving their standing in life.

The idea of sport may also emphasize the independence of a Supreme Being. In any tradition, the appearance of God within the creation might raise a doubt concerning divine supremacy. One perspective derived from the *Bhāgavatam* is that whether God speaks from clouds, a mountain, or a burning bush, or whether He descends as an avatar, these are all sporting activities in the sense of freely chosen and undertaken for enjoyment without the prospect of negative consequences. God's actions are fully voluntary. He never comes under the control of nature, which is controlled by His energy known as time.

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*The full list appears in the January/February and July/August issues, and is always available at Krishna.com, where the list also includes Krishna conscious gatherings.

The Examined Life

THE GREEK PHILOSOPHER Socrates famously said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." To an outsider, it might seem that members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, having reached a conclusion, have stopped examining life. When I first came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one of my friends, while respecting my decision, entreated me to "never give up the search." But my search didn't end; it became a guided search. I discovered what to look for and where to look for it, and I got plenty of help.

In examining life, or reality, one has to begin with some foundational beliefs. In philosophy, foundationalism is the theory that one can justify one's philosophy only after accepting certain foundational (and impossible to prove) beliefs. One then builds from that foundation. For the French philosopher Rene Descartes, a foundational belief was "I think; therefore I am." From that beginning point, which he felt was indisputable (though philosophers have disputed it), he began to try construct his picture of reality.

Another of Descartes's foundational beliefs was that one can arrive at the truth through reason alone. Vaiṣṇavas, or Kṛṣṇa devotees, would agree that reason is necessary for philosophical investigation, but by itself it's not enough. While the Vedic way of arriving at the ultimate truth rests primarily in receiving revealed knowledge through the transcendental sound of the Vedic scriptures, reason certainly plays a part. When Lord Kṛṣṇa is teaching Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* in the Thirteenth Chapter He tells Arjuna that whatever He is teaching has already been presented in Vedic literature "with all reasoning as to cause and effect." In other words, Kṛṣṇa suggests that Arjuna should accept His teachings not only because they're scriptural, but also because they're reasonable—they make sense.

The philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness appeals to me on that level: it just makes sense. Once, after explaining some of the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Prabhupāda turned to a guest and asked, "This philosophy does not appeal to you?" I find that the more I study Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings, the more sense they make.

Śrīla Prabhupāda constantly challenged his disciples to appreciate the reasonableness of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He tirelessly incited discussions that would inspire "aha!" moments. When Prabhupāda spoke, the lights in our heads went on. The same thing happens now as we read his books, listen to recordings of his lectures and conversations, and discuss Kṛṣṇa's teachings every morning in temples around the world. We constantly put the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness up against all others, and we're never disappointed. We came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness after being convinced that it presents an accurate picture of reality. And we stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness because we see that its worldview withstands any philosophical attack.

Socrates, Descartes, and others in the Western intellectual tradition examine life with the tools of reason and research. And their foundational belief is that these tools (or tool—Descartes believed only in reason, not sensual data) are all they need to uncover reality. But it is entirely reasonable to assume that the truth lies beyond the limited reach of these tools. Life is filled with hints of a fuller reality, of an existence beyond matter. By studying evidence that purports to originate in that other existence, as do the Vedic scriptures, we can get satisfying answers to questions that perennially challenge the world's greatest minds. —*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

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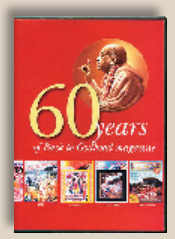

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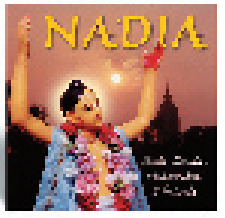

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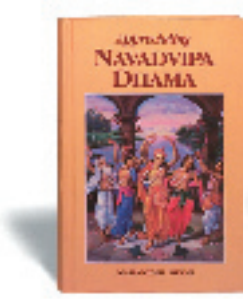
Pilgrimage Guides



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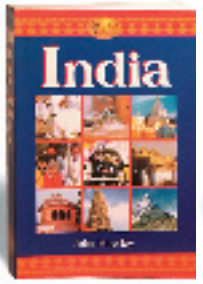

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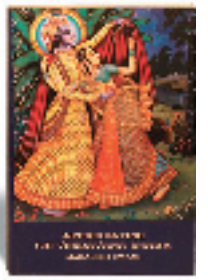

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Vedic Thoughts

The soul infected with the material disease should want to return to his pure, original state without annihilating his individual identity. Lord Kṛṣṇa saves such persons from the jaws of the demoniac conception of trying to become one with God. It is suicidal for the spirit soul to attempt to lose his inherent individuality. The happiness the impersonalist experiences by disentangling himself from the knots of material existence is automatically available to the Lord's devotee as a by-product of devotional service.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Renunciation Through Wisdom, p. 124

◆

Exalted persons like Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā could not properly describe the truth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. May the Lord, who is always worshiped as the protector of all devotees by great saints who observe vows of silence, meditation, devotional service and renunciation, be pleased with us.

Nārada Muni
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.10.50

◆

O enemy of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, O Lord of the universe, the perfection of my life and the most cherished mercy You could show me would be for You to consider me the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of Your servant.

King Kulaśekhara
Mukunda-mālā-stotra 25

Our contention is not that the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are historical events but that they are a revelation of the Truth in the form of historical events. The pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are not, therefore, less true than any historical events whatsoever. They are much more. All the historical events of this world will be enabled to disclose the real elements of the Truth that they represent only when they would be set forth in their proper relationship to the only eternal Verity, viz., the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Śrī Kṛṣṇa: The Supreme Godhead,
Section 2 (essay)

◆

The influence of material nature cannot harm an enlightened soul, even though he engages in material activities, because he knows the truth of the Absolute, and his mind is fixed on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

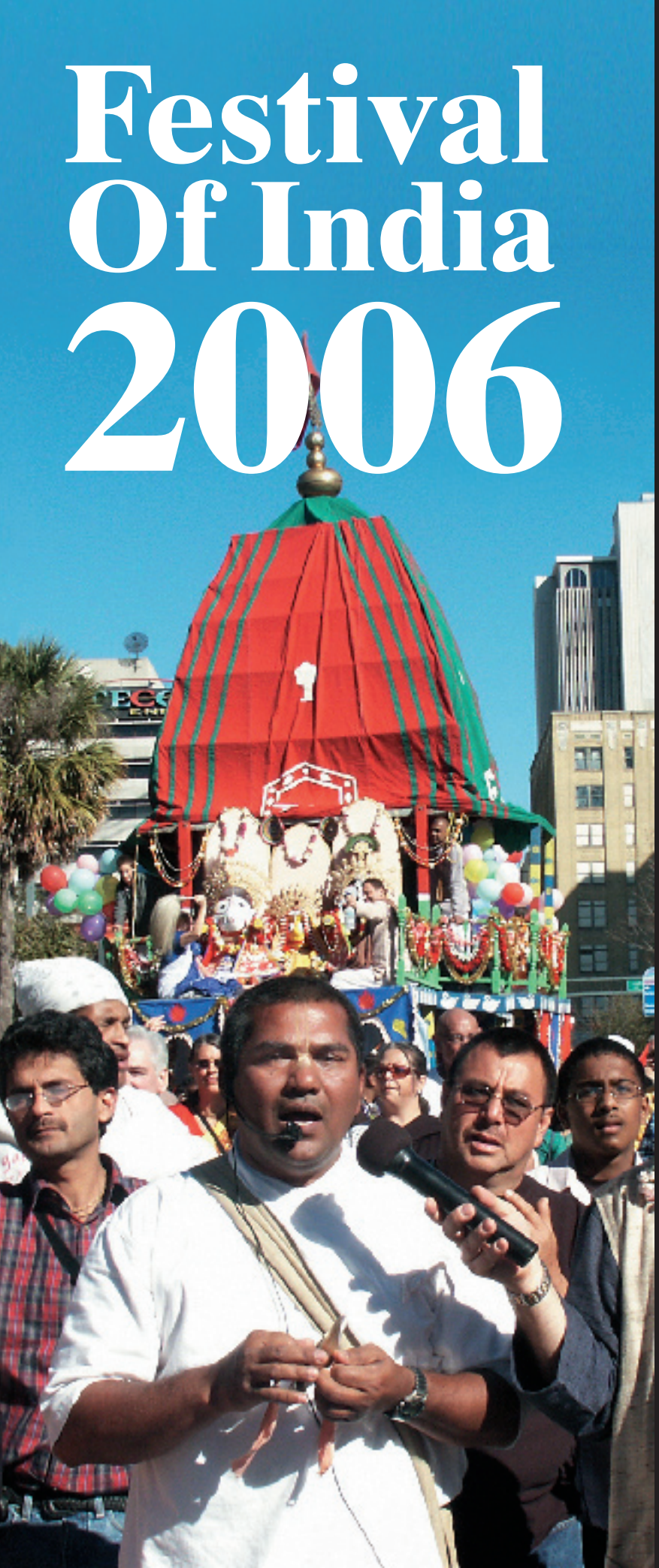
Lord Kapila
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.27.26

◆

If I am engaged in devotional service unto You, my dear Lord, then very easily can I perceive Your presence everywhere. And as far as liberation is concerned, I think that liberation stands at my door with folded hands, waiting to serve me —and all material conveniences of dharma [religiosity], *artha* [economic development] and *kāma* [sense gratification] stand with her.

Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura
Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta 107

Festival Of India 2006



Schedule for North America

May 10–12: Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
May 20: Baltimore Rathayātrā
June 3–4: Atlanta Rathayātrā and Panihati Festival
June 10: New York City Rathayātrā
June 24: Chicago Rathayātrā
July 4: Washington, D.C., Rathayātrā
July 9: Montreal Rathayātrā
July 15–16: Toronto Rathayātrā
July 22: Detroit Rathayātrā
July 30: Los Angeles Rathayātrā
August 6: San Francisco Rathayātrā
August 12–13: Vancouver Rathayātrā
August 16: Vancouver Janmāṣṭamī/ Vyāsa Pūjā Festival
August 20: Edmonton Rathayātrā
August 27: Calgary Rathayātrā
September 2–4: Seattle Rathayātrā
September 16: Newark, New Jersey, Rathayātrā
September 23: Philadelphia Rathayātrā
September 30: Washington, D.C., Śrī Rāmacandra Vijaya Festival

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IMPORTANT NOTE: Some of these dates are not yet confirmed. Before scheduling your travel, be sure to confirm the festival dates with the ISKCON temple in the city where the festival is to be held. Or email Festival Of India: madhuha@festivalofindia.org.

Left: First Tampa Rathayātrā, January 2006